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035 E3 2002 - Jere and the Women

It's the ultimate - three days in LA at the world's biggest gaming convention. Jere Lawrence, 6'8", braved the 14 hour plane trip, braved the booth babes, and put his hands on 101 games for PC. Ace.



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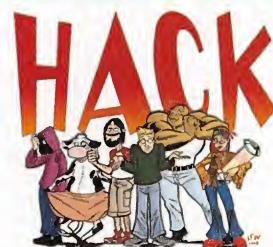
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ACN 002 647 645
ISSN 1326-5644

PRINTED BY Webstar

DISTRIBUTED BY
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FAX 1300 650 777

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Not PC enough



As all our most vociferous readers are aware, we've been dabbling in the dark side of gaming for the past three months, and included an Xbox section in PCPP. We

knew the response to a console section in a mag with a big red PC in the title would be met one of two ways: either mild acceptance or screaming, howling outrage.

Because of the console market, the number of PC releases per year has been dwindling. A case in point: Activision, one of the staunchest of PC distributors has only five more PC games due for release in 2002. And none of them are Doom III. To this end, we looked around for another source of quality games, and believed we found it in the Xbox.

But three months on, as well all know, the Xbox is not looking so great. Sales are lacklustre, and the promising titles are just that, a promise rather than a reality. Also, our spies in the backrooms of various high-profile publishing companies reveal that the Only On Xbox sticker you see on games such as Halo might not be as exclusive of PC as you might think. And Jere's recent trip to E3 has confirmed that developers can easily - and we mean super-easily - convert Xbox games to PC games.

But most of all we cannot ignore reader response. You folks in subscriber-land and newsagent-land (and hey, maybe even supermarket-land) have let us know on the forums and by mail that you do not want the Xbox section in your PC mag. It's as simple as that. We said we'd give it three months, you said okay, we've given it three months and still you're determined. And here's a big up to grjohnson who carefully tore his Xbox section from each of the three issues and

sent it back to us, complete with a loving note along the lines of, "Thanks but I have toilet paper that is softer."

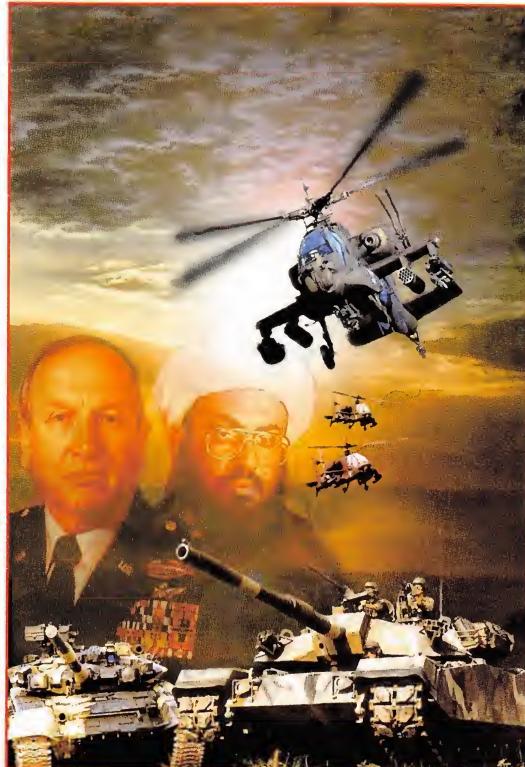
It's fitting that this issue, which holds the biggest E3 report in the magazine's history - 101 PC games for your delectation - sees us return to our roots. You, the readers, want a dedicated PC mag in a sea of cross-platform titles. You want the PC in PC PowerPlay to really mean something.

So here's to a PC-only magazine! We'll use the space freed up by Xbox to bring you more tech, more tips, more strategy guides and more and chunkier content about PC. Thanks for being part of our little console experiment, and thanks for making the results so clear.

Onward!

Anthony Fordham
Editor

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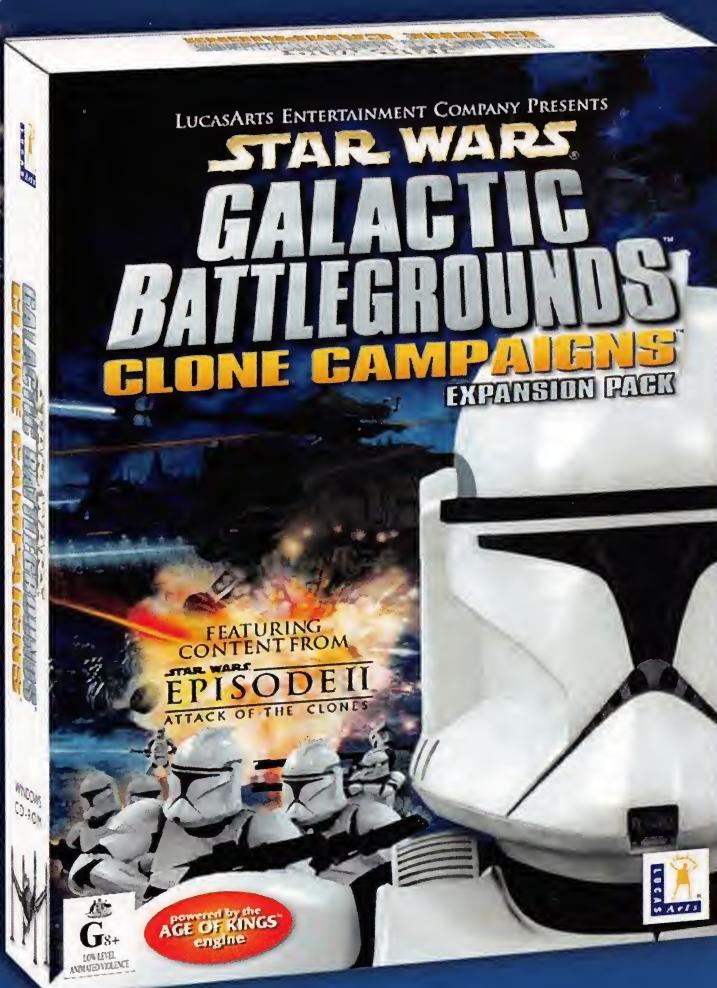
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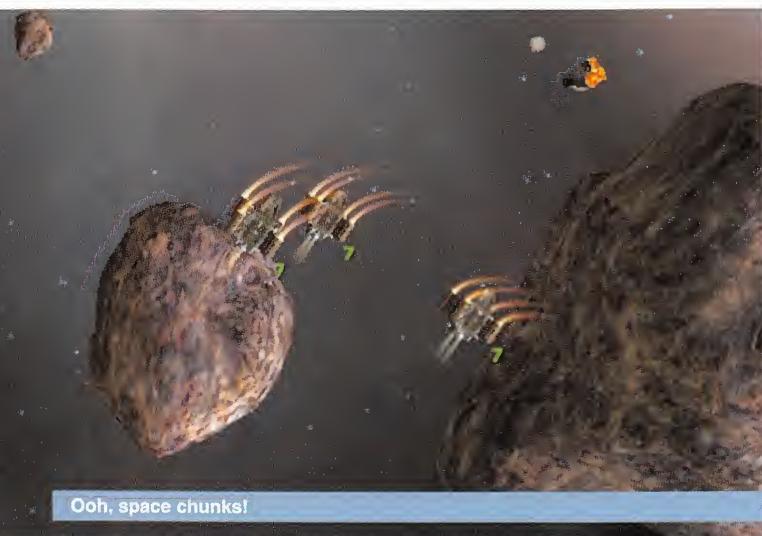
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Ooh, space chunks!

Flying vertebrae

ORB

Homeworld meets I-War, franglais-style



WHAT IS ORB?

A space-based RTS in the vein of Homeworld, but using a realistic physics engine similar to I-War. Inertia and acceleration will play a much more important strategic role and battles are set to cover vast areas of space. French developer Esprit promises dozens of ship types from scouts all the way up to massive carriers.

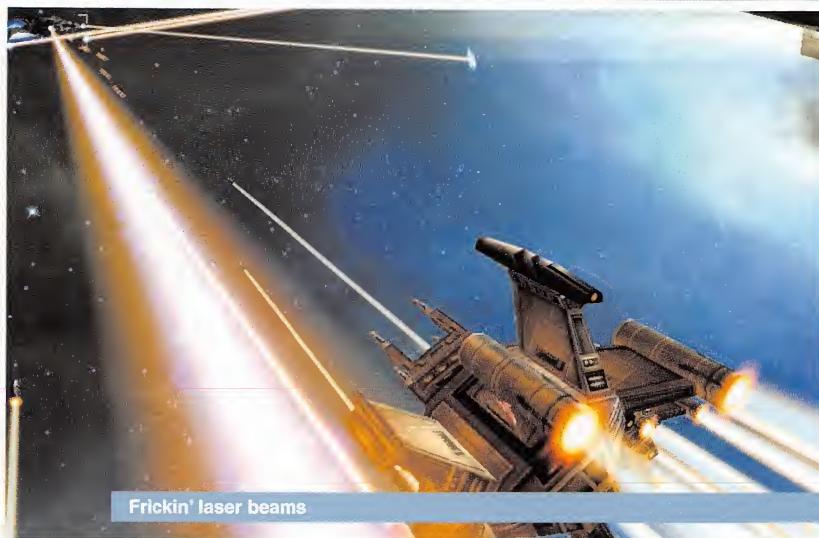
Little ship, many guns. They know what we like.



I've don't think we're in Lyon anymore, Foo-Foo



Sacre bleu! Un beastie!



■ Developer: Esprit ■ Publisher: Strategy First ■ Distributor: GameNation (TBC) ■ Due: Mid 2003

French gaming has an uneven past. For every Ubi Soft title there is a Cryo travesty; for every quirky Rayman there is an impenetrable Ring. The land of Chivalry, Romance and really nice bread has much to answer for, at least to gamers.

However it's not for want of trying. Despite their somewhat doubtful execution, French games are always original in concept and tricked out with tasty art. ORB, from developer Esprit, is no exception.

Homeworld, when it was released back in 1999, changed the face of Realtime Strategy. It showed that a proper 3D space could be made to work, and that RTS didn't need to be tied down onto a 2D plane with some artificial line-of-sight enhancements. And yet, after Homeworld, a long sullen silence settled over the galaxy, broken only by Conquest: Frontier Wars (also from a French distributor - coincidence? Letters to the usual address) which itself was a 2D RTS pretending to be 3D.

A deep pretence

It's difficult to argue that true 3D strategy isn't an immense task for coders. Handling up and

down as well as back and forth is a challenge for both developers and gamers. Homeworld used a flattened cylinder, limiting the Y axis, yet the game still required a radically different way of thinking about tactical combat.

The lads at Esprit leap right into this difficult field with their French-booted feet planted firmly in front of them and their French-plaits flying. The game aims to be different, so ORB's true innovation is to combine the 3D strategy of Homeworld with the more realistic physics modelling of I-War.

Ships now take quite a bit of time to make a turn, and because space is a vacuum, it will be necessary to both accelerate and then decelerate, or it's next stop Alpha Centauri. Turns will now take hundreds of kilometres to complete, and we will hopefully see some of the true scale of what real space-combat would be like. Fleets will be strung out across millions of kilometres, little more than twinkling lights against the stars.

Esprit has paid special attention to AI micromanagement of the fleet, and each ship has a Doctrine, which can be switched quickly from Warrior, to Scout, to Hiding or various

other options. This should allow for quicker tactical decisions, although how Doctrine is much different to the regular slew of AI options seen in other games, we are yet to determine.

Look into my ORB

The universe of ORB is full of the usual guff: ancient races pitted against each other, the lost technologies of the whatever, quests across the galaxy and the detonation of entire worlds for no very good reason beyond petty personal politics. Ship design is gritty and heavily industrial, giving a tasty Battlestar Galactica feel to the game. Along with spectacular environmental effects, all these graphical touches should combine to form a very tasty gaming experience.

It's a sad fact that many of the games that appear in our First Looks don't eventually see the light of general release, but here's hoping that ORB proves to be an exception. Beta-testing is currently underway and with Strategy First's reputation for organising decent distribution, we should see the game in Australian shops mid next year.

Anthony Fordham

Why ORB Deserves a Second Look:

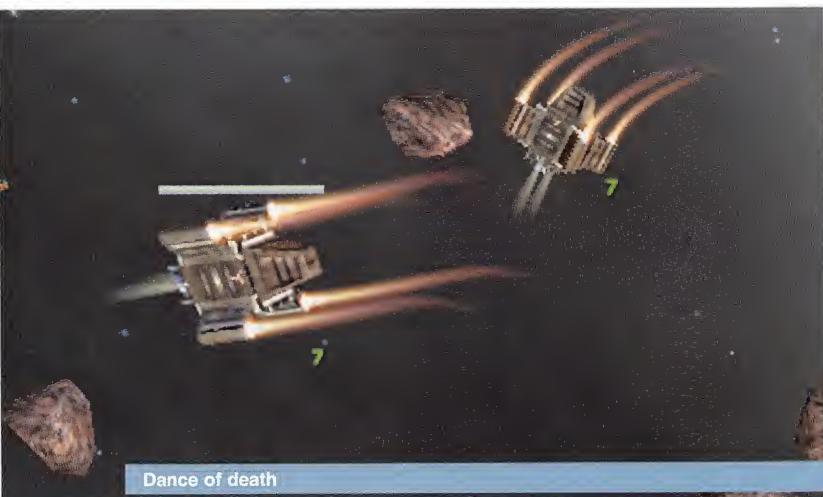


Homeworld's look, I-War's physics

Set to capture the immensity of space-battle

Battlestar Galactica flavoured world

Nebula effects to die for and ship designs to bring you back



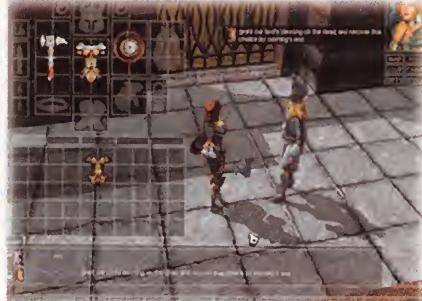
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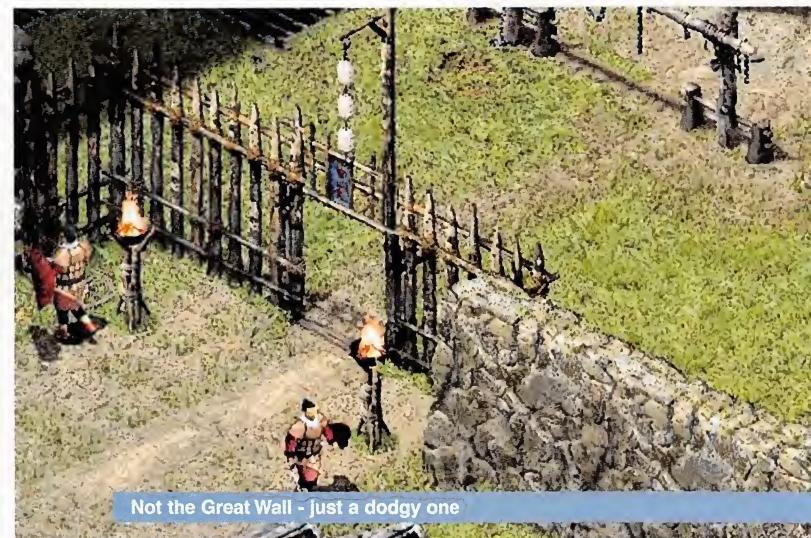
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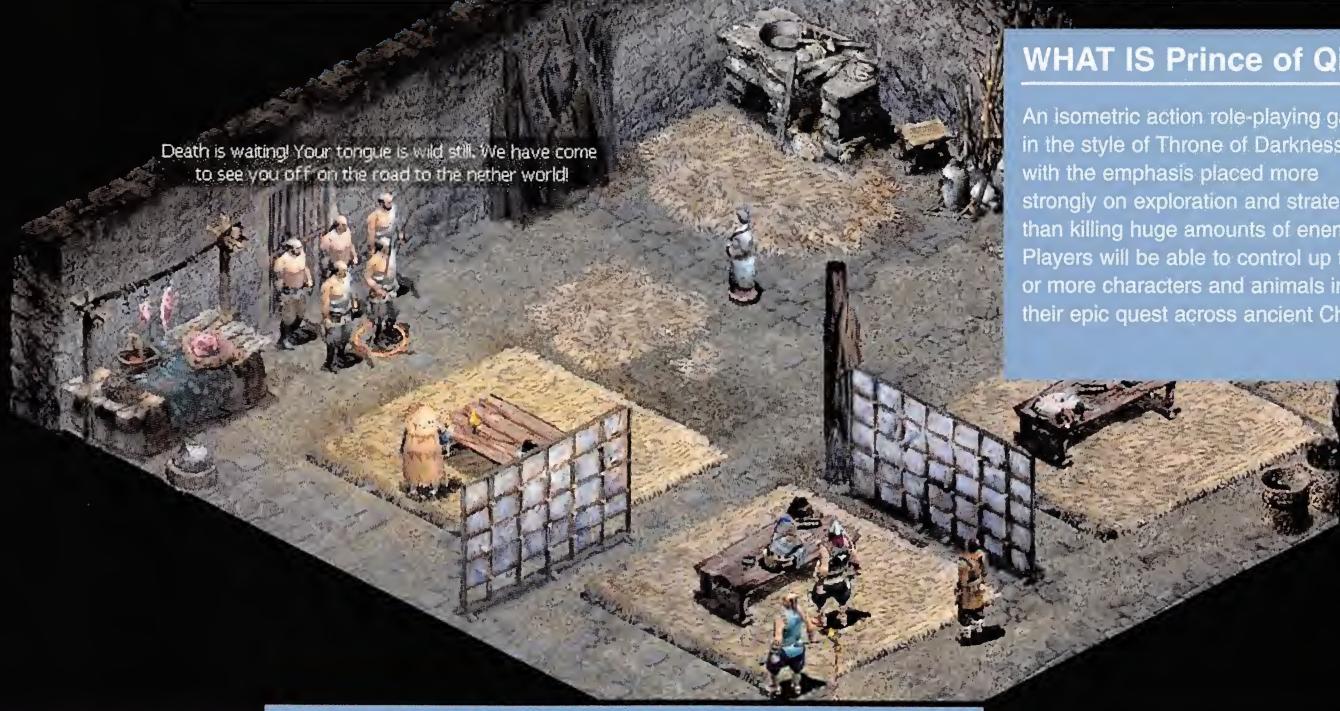
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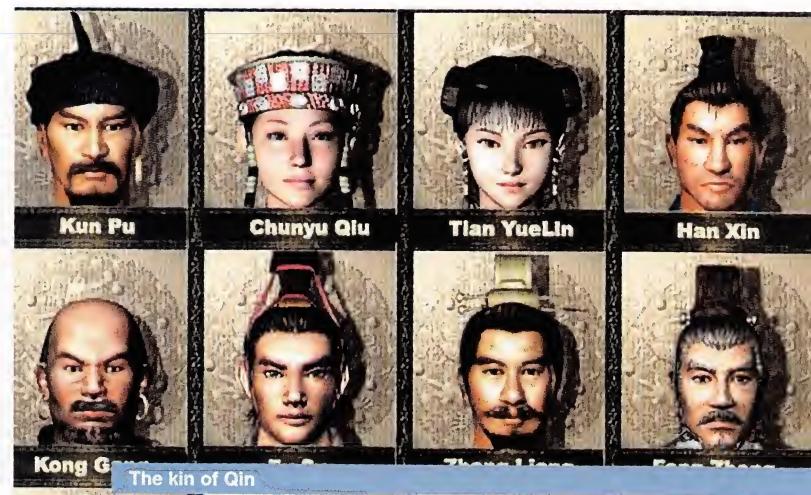
Prince of Qin

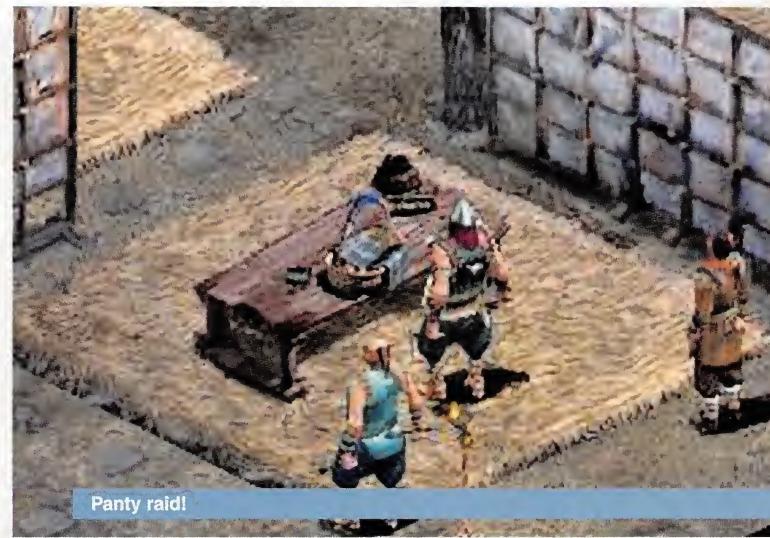
In the worlds before Monkey, primal chaos reigned...



WHAT IS Prince of Qin?

An isometric action role-playing game in the style of Throne of Darkness but with the emphasis placed more strongly on exploration and strategy than killing huge amounts of enemies. Players will be able to control up to ten or more characters and animals in their epic quest across ancient China.





■ Developer: Object Software ■ Publisher: Strategy First ■ Distributor: N/A ■ Due: TBA

Set 2200 years ago at the end of the Qin Dynasty, Prince of Qin looks set to draw its story line direct from the annals of history. The first Emperor of China, Ying Zheng (also known as Shi Huangdi which translates as "First August Emperor") was a man gifted with both administrative and military ability. Unfortunately for the people of China he also ruled with an iron fist. Best known today for commissioning the Great Wall of China and the Terracotta Warriors, Ying Zheng was also responsible for massive loss of life. Supposedly one worker died for every metre of the Wall - the Great Wall is 4000km long. Criticism of his inhumane working standards was widespread and the Emperor retaliated by burning books, branding scholars who spoke out against him before forcing them to work on the Wall and having around 460 of his more vocal opponents buried alive. As the old adage goes, power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely.

Fu Su, the protagonist of Prince of Qin, was the oldest son of Ying Zheng, removed from power and banished to the North

when he spoke out against his father. Through political machinations and some mysterious deaths, Fu Su's younger brother Hu Hai managed to enthrone himself as the second Emperor of Qin and ruled with even more barbarism than their father. To stop the madness, Fu Su must leave his life of peace and love behind and set out on the trail of justice and revenge. The game may be quite a while off but the promise sure has us hooked.

To help him in his quest for revenge, Fu Su will be able to recruit up to four NPC characters. The game information we have has been poorly translated from Mandarin so it's not clear whether Fu Su will be a character himself or will be an NPC figure who interacts with the players but does not actually fight. Whatever the case, Prince of Qin will give players the opportunity to make characters from the following classes: Paladin, Muscleman, Killer, Wizard and Sorcerer, each with their own unique skills, spells or fighting styles. Emphasis will be placed firmly on teamwork with the characters being far more effective when

working in unison. Qin will be playable both as a singleplayer game with NPC characters or in a multiplayer cooperative mode where each player controls one of the characters. Additional NPC-summoned creatures can bring the party size up to ten or more. Further drawing on Chinese mythology, Prince of Qin will feature magic and equipment based on the five elements of legend - wood, metal, fire, water and earth. In case all this RPG goodness isn't enough for you then Prince of Qin has another trick up its sleeve. Instead of having all magic armour and weaponry found randomly throughout levels, Qin will allow players to create their own through a fusion of spells, components and equipment, much like the blacksmith in Throne of Darkness.

No release dates have been hinted at as yet but the combination of rich and complex history, strategic gameplay and Diablo-esque monster killing should make Prince of Qin a definite must have.

Daniel Wilks

Why Prince of Qin Deserves a Second Look:



Rich Chinese historical settings

Control ten or more characters and animals

Make your own magic weapons

Monster killing, kung-fu style





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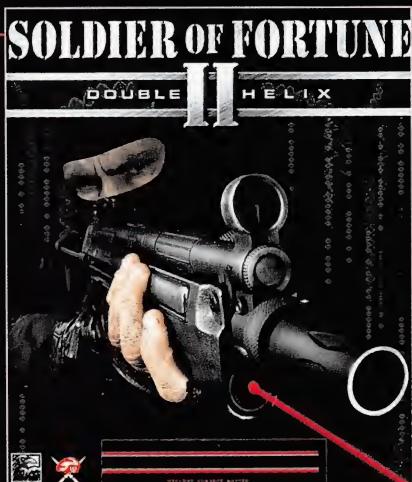
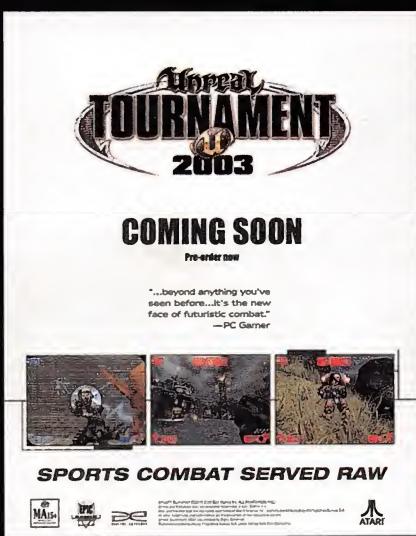
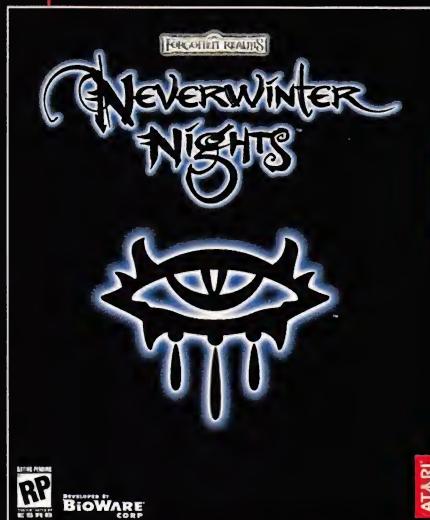
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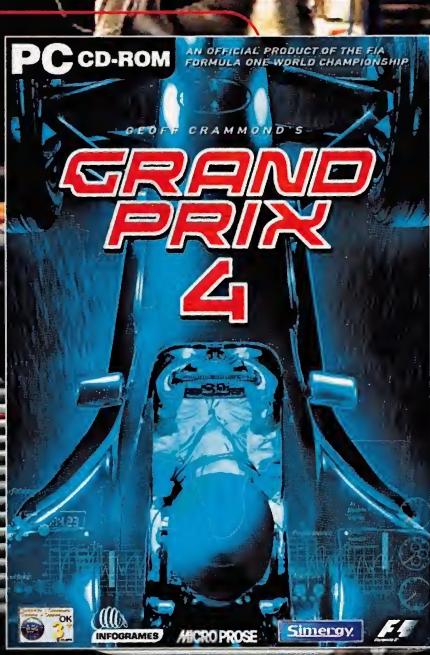
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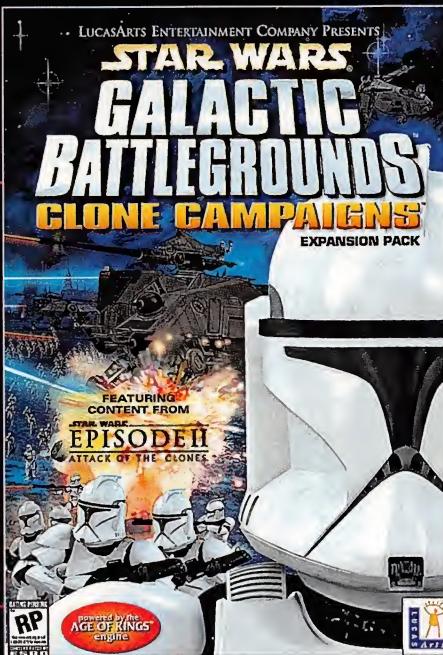
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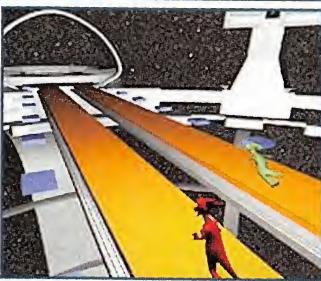
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Spotlight

News from all quarters of the globe

BYTESIZE



RELAXING GAMES

An Irish game developer, MindGames, is currently working on a game specifically developed to help people relax. The game, known as Relax To Win, uses galvanic skin responses as a control mechanism. Electrodes monitor heart rate and the like - the more relaxed the player is, the faster his character will run.

BEER-BOT

The ultimate in slacker tech has been created by a Masters of Engineering candidate at the University of Florida - a robot that opens bottles of beer. ABOR (Autonomous Beer-Opening Robot) can detect bottles, steady them and pop the cap but at this stage cannot open cans or twist-tops.

FILE SHARING PAYS

A recent study has concluded that file-sharing programs such as Napster, Morpheus or Kazaa actually increase the sales of music instead of decreasing them like RIAA (Recording Industry Association of America) has claimed. 34% of people polled bought more music after downloading MP3 rips whereas only 14% bought less.

Price Wars: The Hardware Menace

Losing money on hardware is not as common as we think



With the recent flurry in price reductions on the console market many sources have touted the old adage, "Give away the razor and sell the hell out of the blades," leading us to think each console is losing massive amounts of money on the hardware and making it back through game sales. Contrary to popular belief, Microsoft is the only current console developer to have

"Unfortunately poor sales caused Microsoft to make an early strike in the burgeoning console war."

pre-ordered the console. An estimated 1,000,000 early adopter sales would cause the console to break even on release and would leave a good "gravy" base for game profits. If each of these adopters bought two games then the console would show a profit. After the early adopter market was tapped out, the price was dropped to directly compete with the other consoles on the market. A price

console war, lowering the price to \$US199. Even with devaluation, each unit could still be losing up to \$100. Sony and Nintendo have both dropped the price of their next-generation consoles to stay competitive but are in far less danger of losing money than Microsoft. The reason for this is simple - manufacture costs. Sony has dumped \$US1 billion into its own chip manufacturing plant and the fact that two of its chipsets can now be combined into one, means that the factory can churn out twice the amount of product at half the price. Nintendo has taken a similar stance. Microsoft is the only console manufacturer that has used off-the-shelf technology from a number of third-party developers. So it appears that the only way Microsoft will make any profit is if each Xbox owner bought 35 games apiece. Let's hope there's a lot of good titles on the way.

bought into this idea.

The Xbox hardware was estimated to be worth between \$US320-\$400 at the time of the console's initial release. The Microsoft plan would have run something like this: sell the box at \$US389 or so on the initial release to the early adopters - those who had been waiting outside shops for the launch or people who had

tag of \$US299 would mean the console could be losing as much as \$100 per unit but estimated console sales of between ten and 20 million would build a big enough consumer base to make money back on games.

That would have been the plan at any rate. Unfortunately poor sales caused Microsoft to make an early strike in the burgeoning

Xbox Live

Will online applications resurrect console sales?

Details for Xbox online applications have finally been released and the future looks pretty bright for Xbox owners. The service will start in the third quarter of this year in America at a cost of around \$US50. For the price, subscribers get an Xbox Communicator (online module), a game and a year's subscription to Xbox Live. Monthly subscription services will probably run at around \$US9.95. Games currently in development for Xbox Live include the eagerly anticipated Star Wars Galaxies and an online multiplayer version

of Halo. There are no details as yet as to when the service will be available in Australia but best estimates point to early or mid-2003 when broadband internet access becomes more firmly entrenched. Microsoft is obviously banking hard on the popularity of online gaming - if the venture doesn't work they'll be out of pocket an undisclosed but very large amount and will be the owners of four data-centres and a highly sophisticated voice, data and messaging network with no subscribers.



Say Halo to Xbox Live



Oh my, R2!

BYTESIZE



COLEMAN'S POSTAL

Everybody's favourite midget actor turned security guard, Gary Coleman, will be appearing as himself in the upcoming game *Postal 2*. After his recent legal problems stemming from beating up his only fan, it's good to see somebody giving the little guy a chance to let off some steam without hurting anybody.

Dell Goes To Prison

Hear the sound of the men working on the chain gang

In an interesting move, the PC giant Dell has gone into business with the American prison system, using convict labour in its new consumer-recycling scheme. Detractors of the scheme label it as nothing more than a high-tech chain gang but nothing could be further from the truth. The work is as low tech as it gets, pulling apart old computer systems, salvaging any usable parts and junking the rest. The prisoners will also get paid for their labours. By using such cheap labour and cutting corners, Dell can afford to cut costs, which with any luck, will be reflected in the pricing of its new

systems. There are no plans to institute a similar plan in Australia due to the differences between the penal systems and labour laws but with any luck, Dell system costs will reduce worldwide. Dell joins the ranks of Lee, Levi and 3M as users of prison labour.



Prison systems



Dell coping out?

EDUCATIONAL PRON

A group of sixth-form students at the Marlborough College in Wiltshire were exposed to internet pornography when the teacher supervising an exam started surfing for porn forgetting the computer he was using was connected to an overhead projector. The guilty party is currently taking extended sick leave.

PS2 CUT

Sony has announced its new price cut for the PS2 enabling them to compete with Microsoft and Nintendo for the console market. The cut should be around 30%, lowering the price to about \$350. If the price-cutting war keeps up at this pace, the various companies will soon be giving their machines away for free.

Myst Online

Perpetual multiplayer puzzles online

Ubi Soft and Cyan Worlds have recently announced a deal that will allow Ubi Soft to develop and administer an online version of the massively successful *Myst* gaming franchise. Having already sold 11 million units, *Myst* has been a property in hot demand and the new game that Ubi Soft is looking to develop should only add to its popularity. *Myst Online* (working title) will be a persistent world online game with detailed 3D environments, an evolving storyline,

multiplayer support and real-time voice chat and social interactivity.

Rand Miller, COE of Cyan Worlds, said, "This is the culmination of years of world building. Everything we've learned from our earlier worlds we've poured into *Myst Online*, building a universe that's growing, breathing and alive. The *Myst Online* universe will provide players with a journey that will never end."

Myst Online is due in early 2003 and will be available as a subscription service.



Myst me?



Myst mountain top

LANDMINE STING

In a truly science-fiction inspired move, the American military is testing the viability of training bees to detect landmines. As bizarre as it sounds, the idea is not without merit - bees have incredible senses and can be "trained" with relative ease. Tiny electronic tags will allow the army to monitor the location of the bees at all times.

BYTE SIZE



BOOKS

H.P. Lovecraft Archives
www.hplovecraft.com

If you've ever wanted to know anything about the life, times and works of one of the fathers of modern horror, HP Lovecraft, this is the site for you. A comprehensive listing of his stories, letters, mythology, characters and his impact on popular culture. This is absolutely fascinating stuff.

BUSINESS

Pimp Hats
www.pimpshats.com

This ain't no costume shop but it's a must-see for those of you who want to look like a playa. Big furry hats, bell bottoms, Zoot suits - it's all here. If you've ever had the urge to look like Antonio Fargas (and honestly, who hasn't) then now is your chance. It's more than fly - it's superfly!

COMPUTERS

Elly, I Dream Of You
members.tripod.com/elly_my_love/

An obsessive anime/gaming fanboy's personal site dedicated to the worship and love of the fictional character Elly. He writes poetry to her, talks about her like she's real and generally acts in a way that would have most people institutionalised. Pay special attention to his letters page, it's hilarious.

CULTURE

Teleport City
www.teleport-city.com

Keith Allison of Teleport City Heavy Industries hits you with a whole loaf of kung-fu as he writes about music, movies, games, people, his childhood and anything else that takes his fancy with a sense of warmth and humour that nearly defies description. If you have a couple of hours to spare, Teleport City is the place to waste it.

WEBBED FEET

MORROWIND

www.morrowindchronicles.com



The game may have only just been released but Morrowind is taking the gaming world by storm with a combination of sweeping story and compelling gameplay. A 3D RPG of epic scope, Morrowind contains everything necessary in a game, but in case you want something more, Morrowind Chronicles is your one stop shop for Elder Scrolls III-related goodies. The site is divided into a number of intuitive sections, each containing information or files related to the Morrowind experience. The end result is a heaping helping of facts, hints and tips, fan-submitted

art and stories.

Of special interest is the download section, which contains everything from music and movie clips to wallpapers and plug-ins. There are already a number of plug-ins available for download, ranging from a few new missions to items which facilitate water exploration to an interesting one which transforms your character into a vampire. Expect to see a lot more plug-ins and mods over the next few months as both the Elder Scrolls official site and Morrowind Chronicles host tutorials and tool-sets for landscaping, world building,

mission editing and the like. With a little luck, the net will soon be flooded with extra missions and interesting add-ons to make a great game even greater.

Areas of interest are the comprehensive histories of the different countries within the game, descriptions of the materials used in construction of weapons and armour and an informative and funny tutorial on the art of alchemy. Other sections detailing weapons, shields, monsters and items will be online real soon now. A great game deserves an equally great website and Morrowind Chronicles is just that.



GAMES

What Pre-1985 Video Game Character Are You?
blog.ravenblack.net/quiz/videogame.pl

Finally a test that will allow you to answer the question that has been plaguing the minds of scientists the world over since the mid 80s - what pre-1985 video game character are you? Now you can finally feel complete. The void will be filled. You will know deep down who you really are. I am a Tron Light Cycle.



PEOPLE

JAH Ministries
members.lycos.co.uk/JAHMP/

If this is the truth about all things on planet Earth then we're all screwed. JAH rants and raves, waxes lyrical about biblical events and explains to us why Star Wars, Close Encounters, John Carpenter's They Live and Dune (the movie, not the book) are science FACT, not science FICTION.



MOVIES

Stick Figure Death Theatre
www.sfdt.com

If you haven't looked at Stick Figure Death Theatre then you haven't truly lived. It started as a joke but grew out of hand when people started sending in their own animations of stick figures offing each other (or themselves) in interesting and often amusing ways. If you need a good laugh then look no further.



SCIENCE

Cheng Research Institutes
webhome.idirect.com/~kccheng/index.html

If someone can work out what this man is on about you're probably as insane as he is. Wonderfully broken HTML, garish colours and insane rantings about the Nazi-CIA and torture highlight this page which seems to have a theory about everything scientific, or otherwise odd. Hell, you can even apply to his proposed university.



MUSIC

Eugene Mirman
www.eugenemirman.com

Some insanity knows no bounds. Thrill as a small, poorly animated boy called Eugene mangles the hits. Be shocked at his esoteric musical stylings and choice of material. Horrifying but strangely fascinating at the same time, the Eugene Mirman site will stun you with its originality and total waste of bandwidth.



SPORT

Alexander Karelin
www.karelin.ru/index_en.html

This is rather like juniors wrestling tournaments. To see an aspiration to a victory at children's faces and, main, a confidence in themselves and herewith to understand that I concern this... Perhaps this is something we call happiness? Insane, broken English ranting from the "strongest man in the world".

ARQuake

Australian geeks pioneer new level of gaming

If you've ever fancied the idea of running around strapped into a wearable computer shooting digitised monsters in real-world settings with a force-feedback gun then you're in luck (and in need of some serious counseling). ARQuake, currently being developed by a group of programmer geeks at the University of South Australia could very well be one of the first tentative steps into a new genre of gaming. Unlike VR (Virtual Reality) which replaces reality with a totally digitised overlay, AR (Augmented Reality) overlays partial images much like a HUD (Heads Up Display). This experiment in AR technology utilises wearable computers to power a modified port of Quake which overlays the monsters, weapons and items over real world locations. Players are required to wear bulky computer packs, goggles and carry a plastic gun to interact with the program. The nature of AR means that when coding is complete, monsters will be able to hide behind real

world objects to use them as ambush points or cover. Likewise, players will be able to use real-world locations for similar purposes.

Although this initial test is only being used for experimental and academic purposes, it is unlikely to go unnoticed by gaming

companies as a field of potential advance. With the increase in the power of consoles, PDA and PC systems and the concurrent decrease in size, it shouldn't be too long before we see commercial applications for the technology. Within a few years it should be possible to plug a gun and set

of AR goggles into a PDA and go tramping about in real-world locations fraggering computer-generated monsters. The steady development of wireless networking technology should also make multiplayer AR a definite possibility. Games like ARQuake could be the laser-tag of the next generation.



With a few subliminal flashes, they'll even be eating their broccoli



Now Quake is reality



Kill monsters in dark alleys

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Australia's Most Wanted

Send your entries to
amw@pcpowerplay.com.au

Game developers really need to come up with something new. With the exception of Neverwinter Nights all of the games in the top ten are sequels. Admittedly all of the original games were classics and definitely deserved sequels but the list does serve to highlight a major trend that has become increasingly more noticeable in the last couple of months - instead of trying something new, game developers are simply improving on formula. Most of these games are due really soon now, so maybe next month we'll see something new.



| AUSTRALIA'S MOST WANTED | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 | Doom 3 |
| 2 | Neverwinter Nights |
| 3 | Grand Theft Auto 3 |
| 4 | Deus Ex 2 |
| 5 | I.G.I. 2 |
| 6 | Unreal Tournament 2003 |
| 7 | Icewind Dale 2 |
| 8 | Counter-Strike: Condition Zero |
| 9 | Warcraft 3 |
| 10 | Imperium Galactica 3 |

Web of Heroism Comp

Spin us a yarn!

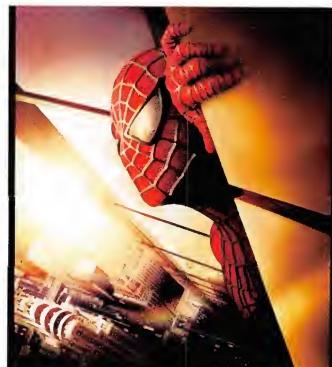
Spider-Man has winged (or should that be swung) it's way to our hallowed shores and taken the cinemas by storm. To celebrate the launch of the movie and game the good people at Activision and Australia's greatest comic shop chain, Phantom Zone have teamed up to bring one lucky reader a webtastic prize pack. That's right, you can win a copy of Spider-Man, a huge poster ad a heap of Spider-Man related comics and other goodies. All you have to do to win is send us a story about a true act of personal heroism that you have performed. No daring acts of bravado are necessary - just real incident in which you have acted heroically.

Send entries to:

Web of Heroism Competition

C/O: PC PowerPlay
 78 Renwick St
 Redfern 2016

PHANTOM ZONE



dr claw

okay my 133+ friends you will remember that last month i was telling you all about my new pc which i bought from the computer fair from the guy who looked like a pirate but i ran out of time. anyway my dad and i went to the fair because i had held my breath until my dad said okay we can go so we went and then this pirate guy said i could have this whole pc for \$2000 and my dad said that even though he didn't know anything about pcs he still knew that \$2000 was too much to pay for a celeron 366 on an

all in one motherboard. anyway that was about when i started to cry not because i am a crybaby but because the smell was starting to get to me. i told my dad that i was going to be sick because there were all these grey market geforce4 ti4600s lying around for \$350 each and i just couldn't stand it and dad told me to be quiet and the pirate guy said my dad shouldn't be so hard on me and i agreed so dad punched the pirate guy right in his bald parrot and the parrot did its business on a neighbouring

retailer's display of core-unlocked Athlon Thunderbird 1.4s so there was a bit of a scuffle and before you knew it there were about twenty people screaming at each other in about thirteen languages and the pirate had his parrot by the neck and was pointing it tail-first at people and using it as a kind of machine gun and my dad and i ran away and hid under a trestle table and ate sausage sandwiches. anyway so i didn't have to pay \$2000 for my pc after all the bald pirate guy said i could have it for \$500 when my dad and i jumped out at him from a dark alley a couple of hours later. so all in all it was a good day and one of the best days i have had with my dad for a long time. l8r!



The Official Australian Games Chart

Compiled by Inform in association with AVSDA

W/E 26 May 2002

**TOP
20**

**Best Selling Full Price
PC Games (over \$30)**

| | | |
|----|---------------------------------|-----------|
| 1 | ★ Soldier Fortune 2: Double H | Action |
| 2 | ▼ EA Sports V8 Challenge | Racing |
| 3 | ◆ The Sims Vacation | Strategy |
| 4 | ▼ Star Wars Jedi Knight 2 | Adventure |
| 5 | ▼ The Sims | Strategy |
| 6 | ◆ Medal Of Honor Allied Asslt | Action |
| 7 | ◆ The Sims Hot Date | Strategy |
| 8 | ▲ Harry Potter & Philosopher | Adventure |
| 9 | ◆ The Sims Collectors Edition | Strategy |
| 10 | ▼ Dungeon Siege 1.0 | RPG |
| 11 | ▼ Heroes Of Might & Magic IV | RPG |
| 12 | ▲ Empire Earth | Strategy |
| 13 | ▼ Diablo II: Lord Of Dstinction | RPG |
| 14 | ▼ Star Wars Galactic Bttlegrnd | Strategy |
| 15 | ◆ FIFA 2002 World Cup | Sports |
| 16 | ▲ Sim City 3000 Unlimited | Strategy |
| 17 | ▼ Civilization 3 | Strategy |
| 18 | ▼ C & C Red Alert 2 | Strategy |
| 19 | ★ Age Of Empires 2 | Strategy |
| 20 | ★ Diablo II | RPG |

★ New Entry ◆ Non Mover ▲ Up from last week ▼ Down from last week

Charts can be viewed at
www.informbd.com.au as part of



For further information phone 02 9264 0095 © 2001 by Inform. All rights reserved



Gunter-saxon bratwurst, check out that serving fraulein!

COMING SOON

June

2002

1500 AD: New World (EA) -

www.scholiast.org/history/timetables/1500s.html

4x4 Evolution 2 (Take 2) - www.4x4evolution.com

Britney Dance Beat (THQ) - www.britneyspears.org

Conflict Desert Storm (GameNation) -

www.sci.co.uk/games/conflict/desert_storm/

F1 2002 (EA) - www.f12002.com

Gore (Take 2) - www.4drulers.com

Haegemonia (Take 2) - haegemonia.cryogame.com/

Hidden and Dangerous 2 (Take 2) - www.handd2.godgames.com

Moto GP: Ultimate Racing Technology (THQ) -

www.motograndprix.com

Neverwinter Nights (GameNation) - www.neverwinterights.com

Operation Flashpoint: Resistance (GameNation) -

www.bistudio.com/resistance

Project IGI 2: Covert Strike (GameNation) -

www.codemasters.com/igi2/

Settlers 4 Gold (Ubi Soft) - www.settlers4.com

Soldier of Fortune 2: Double Helix (Activision) -

www.ravensoft.com/soldier2.html

Spider-Man: The Movie (Activision) - www.activision.com

Stealth Combat (Take 2) - www.stealth-combat.com

Sven Goran Eriksson Manager (Ubi Soft) -

www.anagramgenius.com/archive/svengo.html

Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3 (Activision) - www.planettonyhawk.com

Tropico Gold Pack (Take 2) - tropico.godgames.com

V8 Supercars Race Driver (GameNation) -

www.v8supercar.com.au

July

2002

Batman Vengeance (Ubi Soft) -

batmanvengeance.ubi.com/main.html

Duke Nukem Forever (Take 2) - www.3drealms.com/duke4

Duke Nukem: Hunting (Take 2) -

www.3drealms.com/press/dneshfeatures.html

Fila Tennis (THQ) - www.gamesdomain.com/news/7338.html

Forteresse (Take 2) - www.forteresse-suspendue.com

Railroad Tycoon III (Take 2) -

www.gamefaqs.com/computer/doswin/data/13612.html

Delta Force 4: Task Force Dagger (EA) - www.novalogic.com

Sum of All Fears (Ubi Soft) - [www.redstorm.com/](http://www.redstorm.com)

Madden NFL 2003 (EA) - www.nfl.com

Cricket 2002 (EA) - www.easportscricket.com/

August

2002

Alex Ferguson Player Manager (Ubi Soft) -

www.ubisoft.co.uk/alex/

Battlefield 1942 (EA) - [www.battlefield1942.de/](http://www.battlefield1942.de)

NHL 2003 (EA) - [www.nhl-center.com/](http://www.nhl-center.com)

Need For Speed Hot Pursuit 2 (EA) - [www.needforspeed.com/](http://www.needforspeed.com)

Nascar Thunder 2003 (EA) - www.operationsports.com

DVD

Tiny visual delights with George Soropos

Zoolander

■ Distributor: Roadshow ■ AV: 2.35:1/16:9, Dolby 5.1 ■ Rating: M15+ ■ Runtime: 96 minutes

Meet Derek Zoolander, 3 times winner of the prestigious Male Model of the Year award and proud exponent of 'Blue Steel'. Derek's immaculately groomed existence comes under threat from upstart Hansel when the newcomer takes Derek's fourth title away from him in rather embarrassing circumstances and sets him up for evil designer Mugatu's sinister plot.

Zoolander is Ben Stiller's funniest film by far and is mostly a product of his skills and imagination having been both written and directed by him. The character of Zoolander was created by Stiller when he was host to the VH1 fashion awards (PCPP wasn't invited but we have it on good authority that this is the case) and was so popular that blokes with large chequebooks and small mobile phones were soon talking to Stiller about making a film.

My God. His mullet exploded



Poking fun at the fashion industry isn't exactly difficult, and in that sense the film could have easily been nothing more than a collection of cliched jokes and lame setups, but Stiller puts it together with enough ingenuity to make it his own. Of course not every joke hits the mark but there are more than enough belly laughs to make Zoolander a must see.

The Zoolander DVD also includes a pile of extras including the original VH1 sketches, deleted and extended scenes, outtakes, commentary and a music video.



8.5/10
FEATURE
EXTRAS
8/10

Animal Factory

■ Distributor: Roadshow ■ AV: 1.85:1, Dolby 5.1 ■ Rating: MA15+ ■ Runtime: 91 min



Cult actor Steve Buscemi's directorial debut is a well crafted and well told story about a young offender thrown into the bizarre world of a modern American maximum security prison. The film is based on a true story in novel form written by ex-con Ed Bunker, who also worked on the screenplay.

Animal Factory avoids most of the prison movie cliches and manages to present a fresh approach to what is usually grey and drab subject matter. Willem Dafoe and Edward Furlong are both very good in their roles and even long time loser Mickey Rourke manages a pretty good performance as the prison fruit.

Animal Factory is rather light in the extras department boasting nothing more than the theatrical trailer, A commentary at least would have been nice.



7.5/10
FEATURE
EXTRAS
2/10

Farewell My Lovely

■ Distributor: Carlton/Magna ■ AV: 4:3, Dolby Digital ■ Rating: M15+ ■ Runtime: 91 min



This one is out on Carlton's Screen Classics range which also includes greats like The Fall of the Roman Empire (where half the scenes in Russell Crowe's Gladiator were stolen from) Farewell My Lovely is part of the Philip Marlowe series of detective movies made with Robert Mitchum playing the role of Raymond Chandler's famous private eye.

Marlowe takes on the job of finding a dame for Moose Malloy, a crim fresh out of the slammer and wanted by everyone. The setting is L.A. circa 1940, big cars, big hats and lots of cigarette smoking. The action is loaded but not in the spectacular vein of modern blockbusters and the story has a nice, if now predictable plot twist.

Being a budget release, as so many older films are, Farewell sadly has no special features to boast of.

7/10
FEATURE
EXTRAS
0/10

Dr Who: The Ark in Space

■ Distributor: Roadshow ■ AV: 4:3, Dolby Digital ■ Rating: G ■ Runtime: 98 minutes

The Doctor, Sarah and Harry find themselves on a 70th century Noah's Ark, in orbit around the Earth and looking all the worse for wear. Sensing imminent danger Sarah immediately separates herself from the group and gets trapped in the tanning salon/matter transporter. While the Doctor and Harry take advantage of this time alone to explore the depths of their feelings for each other. However they are soon interrupted by the discovery of a vengeful electric mirror ball and a gigantic plastic moth, forcing them to the inevitable conclusion that the Earth's last inhabitants had a dance party before they put themselves into cryogenic suspension.

Ark in Space is a classic horror story from the Tom Baker era, in fact it's the second story from Baker's very first season as the Doctor and therefore

one in which the actor is still trying to define the character and find his feet in the role. The supporting cast are quite good, particularly Wendy Williams' Vira, and are given reasonable lines to work with, and some well groovy props.

1975 was a big year for TV special effects, it was the year bubble wrap made its first appearance and Doctor Who was of course right there at the cutting edge. The Wirrin moth creatures make good use of the then new material, though the effect now looks rather humorous. The external model shots are also quite natty, and have even been updated with CGI as one of the extras on the DVD. Extras also include unused title sequences and model footage, BBC1 trailers and news footage and an excellent commentary from both Tom Baker and Elisabeth Sladen (Sarah).

The plastic! It burns!



Ocean's Eleven

■ Distributor: Roadshow ■ AV: 2.35:1, Dolby 5.1 ■ Rating: M15+ ■ Runtime: 112 min



Being a fan of the original film since first seeing it fifteen years ago I approached this rehash with some trepidation. Steven Soderbergh has a good reputation as a film maker and this is probably his most accessible movie to date, being his first mass market blockbuster.

Eleven guys rob three Casinos, that's the plan. George Clooney and Brad Pitt make up the core of the team and the acting talent (and the good looks don't hurt the boxoffice either) with some backup from Andy Garcia and Matt Damon. The story is very different from the original, is paced well, but could have used a few more surprises.

Ocean's Eleven also comes with some good extras; two documentaries and two sets of commentaries along with trailers and DVD-ROM.

7/10
FEATURE
EXTRAS
8/10

Mulholland Drive

■ Distributor: Roadshow ■ AV: 1:16:9, Dolby 5.1 ■ Rating: M15+ ■ Runtime: 141 min



Blue Velvet is still one of the all time great films and Twin Peaks still one of the best things ever made for TV. Sadly, like so many other creative people before him, David Lynch has never really risen to those early heights again. That said Mulholland Drive is arguably his best work since Twin Peaks and returns to many of Lynch's obsessions.

Facades and pretense, the secret underworld of human experience and emotion, and the nature of love are the film's main themes. Hollywood is the backdrop but this isn't a film solely about the movie business. As you'd expect from a Lynch film the characters are memorable and larger than life and the story is doused with a liberal amount of surreal weirdness, but not to an extravagant or self indulgent level. An intriguing mystery story if you're after something different.

8/10
FEATURE
EXTRAS
6/10

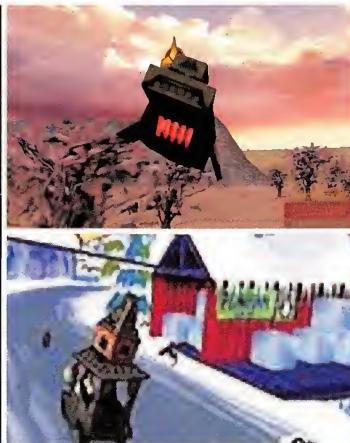
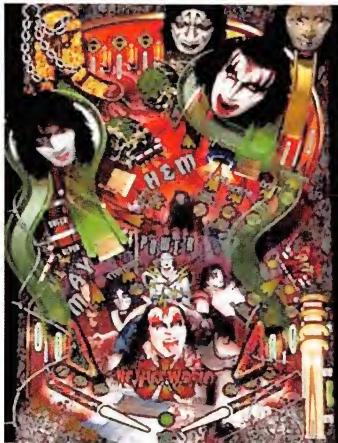
SCORE LIST



Gold Award
90+

There have been a number of emails and letters of late complaining that we haven't really laid into a game for a while now. To pacify those people this month in the score list we've highlighted some of the worst games we've reviewed in recent history for your heckling pleasure. Vent your spleen and enjoy.

GAME NAME SCORE # ISSUE



| | | |
|------------------------------|-----|-----|
| 12 o'Clock High | #46 | 68% |
| 1nsane | #56 | 87% |
| Abomination: Nemesis Project | #44 | 81% |
| Age of Empires 2: | #54 | 90% |
| Age of Sail 2 | #60 | 70% |
| Age of Wonders | #46 | 84% |
| Airfix: Dogfighter | #61 | 79% |
| Airport Inc. | #48 | 42% |
| Akuma: Demonspawn | #47 | 50% |
| Alice | #58 | 83% |
| Alien Nations | #52 | 75% |
| All Star Tennis 2000 | #54 | 62% |
| Allegiance | #50 | 81% |
| Alone in the Dark 4 | #63 | 69% |
| Anachronox | #65 | 85% |
| Anarchy Online | #68 | 86% |
| Arcanum | #64 | 92% |
| Arcatara | #54 | 49% |
| Army Men: Air Tactics | #50 | 65% |
| Army Men: In Space | #48 | 66% |
| Asheron's Call | #50 | 88% |
| Atlantis II | #50 | 78% |
| B-17 2: The Mighty Eighth | #57 | 90% |
| Baldur's Gate II | #53 | 93% |
| Baldur's Gate II: T of B | #65 | 89 |

BASS AVENGER

Oh god, where to start on this utterly craptastic attempt at side splitting comedy. Lure fishermen to their doom with such clever lures as a bra. Looking back on it Anthony might have been a bit lenient with the score. Thankfully nobody bought it and encouraged the developers to make a sequel.

8% in PCPP #57

| | | |
|--------------------------|-----|-----|
| Battle for Naboo | #60 | 25% |
| Battle Isle: Andosia War | #58 | 76% |
| Battle of Britain | #59 | 90% |
| Battlecruiser 3000 | #50 | 72% |
| Battlezone 2: | #48 | 85% |
| Beetle Crazy Cup | #49 | 74% |
| Black & White | #60 | 92% |
| Blair Witch: Coffin Rock | #59 | 62% |
| Blair Witch: Elly Edved | #59 | 74% |
| Blair Witch: Rustin Parr | #59 | 85% |
| Call to Power II | #58 | 78% |
| Carmageddon 2000 | #56 | 40% |

BUCK & BASS 2

Anthony hit the nail on the head when he said, "The interface has all the ergonomics of school furniture". Dull to the extreme, Buck and Bass 2 set you the task of blowing the living crap out of various marvels of nature with high caliber automatic weaponry. Hooray for gun culture.

11% in PCPP #56

| | | |
|-------------------------|-----|-----|
| Championship Mgr 00/01 | #57 | 90% |
| Chicken Run | #59 | 69% |
| Civilization III | #68 | 95% |
| Clive Barker's Undying | #60 | 83% |
| Close Combat: Invasion | #58 | 85% |
| Codename: Eagle | #46 | 64% |
| Colin McRae Rally 2 | #57 | 85% |
| Combat Flight Sim 2 | #57 | 83% |
| Combat Mission | #56 | 90% |
| Commandos 2 | #67 | 91% |
| Conflict Zone | #63 | 84% |
| Conquest: Frontier Wars | #66 | 85% |
| Cossacks | #62 | 79% |
| Cricket 2000 | #51 | 70% |



In the future Man will be brown

| | | |
|--------------------------------|-----|-----|
| Deep Space 9: The Fallen | #62 | 84% |
| Delta Force 2 | #46 | 78% |
| Delta Force: Land Warrior | #58 | 75% |
| Descent 3: Mercenaries | #47 | 65% |
| Desperados | #62 | 86% |
| Deus Ex | #51 | 98% |
| Diablo 2 | #53 | 89% |
| Diablo II: Lord of Destruction | #63 | 90% |
| Dick Johnson V8 Challenge | #46 | 45% |
| Dino Crisis | #53 | 68% |
| Dirt Track Racing | #55 | 90% |
| Dirt Track Racing: Sprint Cars | #59 | 87% |
| Disciples 2 | #73 | 89% |
| Divided Ground | #67 | 75% |
| Dogs of War | #51 | 81% |
| Dracula | #47 | 58% |
| Dragon Riders of Pern | #67 | 60% |
| Dungeon Siege | #74 | 87% |
| Earth 2150 | #53 | 91% |
| Emperor: Battle for Dune | #63 | 79% |

ELITE FORCE EXPANSION

When the Elite Force Expansion pack was released the myth that Trekkies will buy anything Trek related was blasted out of warp. With only 5 missions that could be finished in 5 minutes flat and a few multiplayer tweaks tacked on the expansion pack stood opposed to the concept of value for money.

30% in PCPP #64

| | | |
|-----------------------------|-----|-----|
| Empire Earth | #68 | 89% |
| Enemy Engaged | #50 | 91% |
| Escape from Monkey Island | #55 | 90% |
| Eurofighter Typhoon | #65 | 55% |
| Everquest: Scars of Velious | #59 | 85% |
| EverQuest: Luclin | #73 | 84% |
| Evil Islands | #60 | 79% |
| Evil Twin | #68 | 70% |
| Evolva | #50 | 71% |
| F/A 18 Hornet | #47 | 91% |
| F/A-18E Super Hornet | #54 | 63% |
| F1 Racing Championship | #60 | 90% |
| F1 Season 2000 | #58 | 67% |
| F1 World GP 2000 | #62 | 78% |
| FA Premier League Mgr 2002 | #67 | 70% |
| Fallout Tactics | #61 | 85% |

| | | |
|----------------------------|-----|-----|
| Fate of the Dragon | #61 | 67% |
| FIFA 2000 | #45 | 88% |
| FIFA 2001 | #57 | 84% |
| FIFA 2002: RTWC | #74 | 82% |
| Final Fantasy VIII | #47 | 77% |
| Flight HK | #75 | 86% |
| Fly! II | #65 | 71% |
| Flying Heroes | #51 | 76% |
| Ford Racing | #48 | 72% |
| Fox Sports NBA 2000 | #44 | 56% |
| Freedom: 1st Resistance | #62 | 64% |
| Freedom Force | #74 | 94% |
| Freespace 2 | #44 | 95% |
| Fur Fighters | #58 | 73% |
| Gabriel Knight 3 | #44 | 87% |
| Galaga | #58 | 64% |
| Gangsters 2: Vendetta | #64 | 51% |
| Ghost Recon: Desert Siege | #74 | 70% |
| Giants: Citizen Kabuto | #58 | 86% |
| Global Ops | #74 | 89% |
| Gorky 17 | #47 | 65% |
| Grand Prix 3 | #53 | 88% |
| Grand Prix Legends | #52 | 95% |
| Grand Prix World | #49 | 83% |
| Grand Theft Auto 2 | #44 | 84% |
| Grand Theft Auto 3 | #76 | 89% |
| Grandia II | #74 | 70% |
| Ground Control | #52 | 90% |
| Gulf War: Op Desert Hammer | #45 | 55% |
| Gunlok | #63 | 81% |
| Gunman Chronicles | #57 | 80% |
| Gunship | #50 | 89% |
| Half-Life Blue Shift | #64 | 78% |
| Half-Life: Counter-Strike | #55 | 91% |
| Half-Life: Opposing Force | #45 | 90% |
| Heavy Metal: FAKK 2 | #54 | 80% |

HEIST

"One of the first things we realised about Heist was that Heist was an anagram for Shite, which is astoundingly apt, because this game represents one of the finest examples of how not to design a computer game". Heist could well be the worst game of all time - walk up to a building, watch a couple of coloured bars crawl across the screen and repeat if necessary.

7% in PCPP #62

| | | |
|-------------------------------|-----|-----|
| Heroes Chronicles Final | #67 | 65% |
| Heroes Chronicles | #57 | 68% |
| Heroes of M and M 4 | #74 | 92% |
| H and D Deluxe | #75 | 65% |
| H and D: Fight For Freedom | #46 | 45% |
| Hitman: Codename 47 | #56 | 90% |
| Homeworld: Cataclysm | #55 | 90% |
| Hostile Waters | #61 | 91% |
| Hotel Giant | #76 | 72% |
| Icewind Dale | #52 | 80% |
| Icewind Dale: Heart of Winter | #61 | 70% |
| II2 Sturmovik Eastern Thunder | #75 | 88% |
| Imperium Galactica 2 | #46 | 92% |
| In Cold Blood | #56 | 80% |
| Independence War: Defiance | #44 | 72% |
| Indy Jones Infernal Machine | #45 | 69% |
| Infestation | #56 | 68% |
| International Cricket Captain | #66 | 71% |
| Interstate 82 | #47 | 60% |
| Invictus: Shadow of Olympus | #48 | 51% |
| I-War 2: Edge of Chaos | #63 | 85% |
| Jagged Alliance 2 | #61 | 83% |
| Jane's USAF | #44 | 86% |
| Jedi: Outcast | #73 | 90% |
| Jetfighter 4 | #61 | 75% |
| KA-52 Alligator | #48 | 65% |

KISS PINBALL

Anthony set a new world record for using the word KISS the most times in the least possible space - 28 times in 200 words. That's right, more than 10% of the review is KISS. Luckily the game contained as much KISS as the review so KISS fans should be happy. If not they can go and take it up with somebody who cares.

22% in PCPP #58

| | | |
|-----------------------|-----|-----|
| King of Dragon Pass | #52 | 31% |
| Kingdom Under Fire | #60 | 78% |
| Kiss Psycho Circus | #54 | 64% |
| Klingon Academy | #53 | 83% |
| Kohan: Ahriman's Gift | #73 | 88% |
| Leadfoot | #64 | 80% |



It's coming right for us. I'm scared

| | | |
|----------------------------|-----|-----|
| Legends of Might & Magic | #65 | 40% |
| Lemmings Revolution | #51 | 70% |
| Links 2000 | #44 | 79% |
| Links 2001 | #57 | 82% |
| Links Championship Edition | #68 | 84% |
| The Longest Journey | #68 | 88% |
| M25 Racer | #45 | 25% |
| Madden 2000 | #44 | 84% |
| Madden 2001 | #56 | 78% |
| Madden 2002 | #68 | 78% |
| Majesty | #49 | 79% |
| Martian Gothic | #50 | 51% |
| Max Payne | #65 | 84% |

MISSION HUMANITY

"If bashing your head in a tray full of glass, rusty nails and used syringes while your arse is on fire gets you off then Mission Humanity is nothing short of the greatest game ever". For the rest of us Mission Humanity is a rancid mixture of all the worst expletives you can imagine rolled in manure.

7% in PCPP #61

| | | |
|-----------------------------|-----|-----|
| Maximum Flight | #52 | 78% |
| MDK 2 | #52 | 84% |
| Mech Collection | #54 | 69% |
| Mech Commander 4 | #73 | 79% |
| MechCommander 2 | #64 | 84% |
| Mechwarrior 4: Vengeance | #57 | 91% |
| Mercedes Benz Truck Racing | #57 | 55% |
| Merchant Prince 2 | #64 | 42% |
| Messiah | #48 | 89% |
| Metal Fatigue | #53 | 76% |
| Metal Gear Solid | #57 | 78% |
| Microsoft Flight Sim 2000 | #44 | 84% |
| Midtown Madness | #54 | 82% |
| Might and Magic VIII | #49 | 55% |
| Might and Magic IX | #74 | 87% |
| Millennium Racer | #50 | 70% |
| Monopoly Tycoon | #67 | 75% |
| The Moon Project | #63 | 87% |
| Morrowind | #76 | 92% |
| Motocross Madness 2 | #51 | 85% |
| MotoRacer 3 | #73 | 80% |
| MTV Skateboarding | #55 | 65% |
| Myst III Exile | #62 | 81% |
| NASCAR 2002 | #74 | 90% |
| Nascar 3 | #44 | 89% |
| NASCAR 4 | #60 | 93% |
| Nascar Revolution | #48 | 35% |
| The Nations | #66 | 70% |
| Nations: Fighter Command | #44 | 82% |
| NBA Inside Drive 2000 | #46 | 68% |
| NBA Live 2000 | #45 | 90% |
| NBA Live 2001 | #60 | 81% |
| Need for Speed: Porsche | #52 | 75% |
| Nerf Arena | #46 | 70% |
| NHL 2002 | #68 | 82% |
| NHL Championship 2000 | #46 | 78% |
| Nicktoons Racing | #61 | 71% |
| No One Lives Forever | #56 | 90% |
| Nocturne | #46 | 79% |
| Nox | #48 | 83% |
| Offroad Redneck Racing | #64 | 57% |
| Omikron: The Nomad Soul | #44 | 93% |
| Oni | #58 | 88% |
| Operation Flashpoint | #64 | 94% |
| Original War | #65 | 74% |
| Outlive | #63 | 56% |
| Pacman | #57 | 70% |
| Pacman All Stars | #75 | 50% |
| Pandora's Box | #47 | 68% |
| Panzer Elite | #46 | 85% |
| Panzer General 3 | #58 | 72% |
| PGA Golf Titanium | #59 | 86% |
| Pharaoh | #45 | 88% |
| Phoenix | #46 | 64% |
| Pizza Syndicate | #54 | 52% |
| Planescape: Torment | #46 | 91% |
| Pool of Radiance | #66 | 79% |
| Pro Rally 2001 | #59 | 68% |
| Professional Bull Rider 2 | #56 | 36% |
| Project Eden | #67 | 80% |
| Project IGI | #57 | 86% |
| Puma Street Soccer | #46 | 75% |
| Quake 3: Team Arena | #58 | 57% |
| Quake III Arena | #45 | 93% |
| Rainbow 6: Covert Ops | #58 | 69% |
| Rainbow Six: Rogue Spear | #44 | 92% |
| Rally Championship | #45 | 88% |
| Rayman 2 | #45 | 89% |
| Reach for the Stars | #54 | 79% |
| Red Alert 2 | #56 | 91% |
| Red Alert 2: Yuri's Revenge | #67 | 88% |
| Red Faction | #67 | 81% |
| Resident Evil 3 | #58 | 63% |
| Revenant | #45 | 82% |
| Rising Sun | #48 | 82% |
| Rollcage II | #50 | 80% |
| Rollercoaster Tycoon | #45 | 81% |
| Rugby 2001 | #55 | 80% |
| Rune | #56 | 80% |
| Sacrifice | #55 | 90% |
| Schizm | #66 | 55% |
| Screamer 4x4 | #58 | 59% |
| Septerra Core | #47 | 84% |
| Serious Sam | #60 | 81% |
| Settlers IV | #62 | 65% |
| Seven Kingdoms 2 | #44 | 82% |
| Severance Blade of Darkness | #59 | 80% |
| Shadow Company | #44 | 74% |
| Shadow Watch | #49 | 65% |
| Sheep | #58 | 70% |



| | | |
|----------------------------|-----|-----|
| Shogun: Total War Warlord | #66 | 86% |
| Shogun: Total War | #50 | 92% |
| Sid Meier's Alpha Centauri | #45 | 83% |
| Sim Coaster | #59 | 79% |
| The Sims | #47 | 90% |
| The Sims: House Party | #61 | 80% |

| | | |
|----------------------------|-----|-----|
| Sydney 2000 | #52 | 85% |
| Tachyon: The Fringe | #54 | 84% |
| Thandor | #54 | 69% |
| Theme Park World | #45 | 80% |
| Theocracy | #49 | 76% |
| Thief Gold | #45 | 96% |
| Thief II: The Metal Age | #49 | 95% |
| Throne of Darkness | #67 | 91% |
| Tiger Woods 2002 | #75 | 90% |
| Tiger Woods USA Grand Tour | #49 | 84% |
| Tiger Woods USA Tour | #57 | 59% |

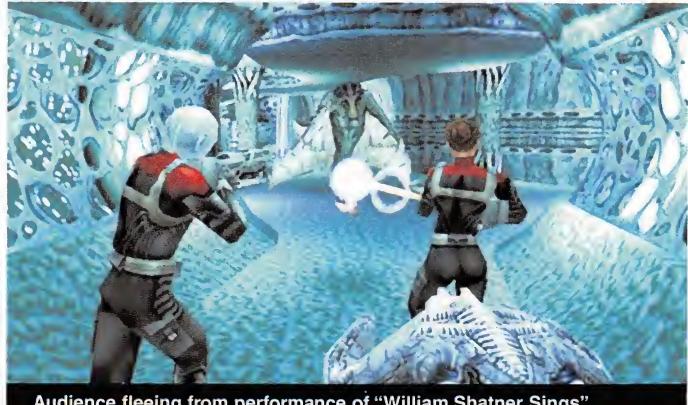
WACKY RACES

Take some cartoon characters, a substandard kart racing game, screw up the sound and control them make it vaguely insulting and you'd have a game like wacky races. The fact that anybody thought it was a good idea to develop in the first place is causing me to lose faith in humanity. Woe is me.

32% in PCPP #54

| | | |
|------------------------|-----|-----|
| Tomb Raider Chronicles | #56 | 71% |
| Tony Hawk Pro Skater 2 | #58 | 92% |
| Tony Hawk Pro Skater 3 | #75 | 91% |
| Train Simulator | #63 | 59% |
| Traitor's Gate | #44 | 78% |
| Tribes 2 | #60 | 93% |
| Tropico | #64 | 71% |
| UEFA Manager 2000 | #51 | 79% |

| | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| STAR TREK: NEW WORLDS | 35% in PCPP #56 |
|-----------------------|------------------------|



Audience fleeing from performance of "William Shatner Sings"

| | | |
|--------------------------------|-----|-----|
| The Sims: Livin' Large | #54 | 88% |
| The Sims: Vacation | #75 | 67% |
| Slave Zero | #47 | 55% |
| Soldier of Fortune | #49 | 86% |
| Soldier of Fortune 2 | #76 | 91% |
| Soulbringer | #51 | 80% |
| South Park Rally | #47 | 41% |
| Space Tripper | #63 | 86% |
| Spec Ops 2: Green Beret | #46 | 60% |
| Speed Demons | #47 | 55% |
| Spiderman | #68 | 67% |
| Spider-Man: The Movie | #76 | 86% |
| Star Trek Voyager: Elite Force | #55 | 86% |
| Star Trek: Armada | #49 | 56% |
| Star Trek: Away Team | #61 | 75% |
| Star Trek: Bridge Commander | #73 | 79% |
| Star Trek: Hidden Evil | #46 | 69% |
| Star Wars: Force Commander | #49 | 58% |
| Starfleet Command 2 | #59 | 55% |
| Starlancer | #49 | 93% |
| Starship Troopers | #56 | 76% |
| Startopia | #63 | 88% |
| The Sting | #66 | 73% |
| Stronghold | #68 | 93% |
| Stunt GP | #63 | 73% |
| Stupid Invaders | #57 | 85% |
| SU-27 Flanker 2.0 | #44 | 83% |
| Sub Command | #68 | 65% |
| Submarine Titans | #56 | 70% |
| Sudden Strike Forever | #65 | 88% |
| Sudden Strike | #60 | 92% |
| Summoner | #61 | 90% |
| Superbike 2000 | #49 | 89% |
| Swat 3: C Q Combat | #46 | 90% |



American McGee's Scandisk



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This month the lucky subs winner will receive a bit of a scoop - the world's first 512-bit GPU, the Matrox Parhelia. It may have been a few years since Matrox were a force to be reckoned with in the gaming arena but with the new Parhelia they're definitely making a comeback. Why should you be excited about the card?

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What does this mean in plain English?

It means the Parhelia is the most advanced and stonkingly fast graphics card to be released on the open market and so packed with features that you couldn't count them all on your fingers and toes.

If the sheer power of the card isn't enough to get your motor running then how about this - the Matrox Parhelia can simultaneously support three monitors and is capable of rendering a panoramic view adding a depth to gaming not previously seen outside the arcades. Give thanks to the good people at Matrox and Focal Point because the future of gaming is here and it's called Parhelia.

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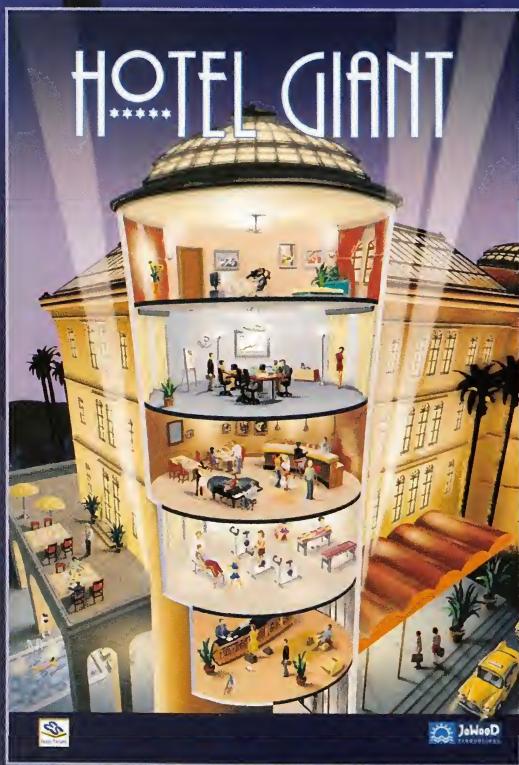
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ELECTRONIC ENTERTAINMENT EXPO 2002

All photos were taken on a Canon PowerShot G2, watch for our review next month.

When you're 6'8" there are quite a large number of objects in the world that, to say the least, are quite uncomfortable. On top of this list would be sports cars, doorways and plane trips. Yet not even the reality of having ones knees pressed into the back of an airline seat for 16 hours is enough to keep me away from the ultimate destination for gamers - E3.

E3 is where all the gamecos of the world come to show what they're currently working on and as an experience is completely and utterly overwhelming. Noisier than a construction site, the glorious sound of gaming is the only thing you can hear. Forget being able to have a quiet conversation with any of the high profile developers that man the numerous stands, instead shouting 'intimately' into one another's ears is the E3 way. The stands themselves are also works of art. From highly detailed fibreglass sculptures of famous gaming characters to 30 foot tall video arrays,

you're constantly bombarded by photons, sound waves and booth babes - a gamer's utopia.

As an old-schooler, the return of a certain Fujiyama (the Atari symbol) was enough to bring a tear to my eye, for others, almost a fist to the face. Infogrames, the new owners of Atari were showing off some brilliant shirts featuring the symbol and probably thought it a good idea to toss a few out to the crowd as gifts. This turned quite ugly when an enthusiastic pair who caught a t-shirt at the same time very nearly came to blows over who would keep it.

As for the progression of games we'll be seeing over the next 12 months E3 2002 featured a lot of Good-guys vs. Terrorists games. Obviously developers have turned their games into an outlet of anger and sympathy for victims of terrorism but with games the ilk of Raven-Shield to come, we will benefit greatly from this.

Graphically, 3D as an art-form for gaming is continuing

to progress faster than any other style in the history of computing - and the results are simply spectacular. To cite Everquest II as an example we are literally reaching a point where the line between 3D animated cartoons and game graphics are quincunx antialiasing, err, I mean blurring.

With this amazing progression of 3D graphics it's time to say goodbye to pre-rendered animations, and hello to real-time rendered cinematics. Not only are cinematics sharper and more colourful, but being real-time rendered take up 1/10000 the space.

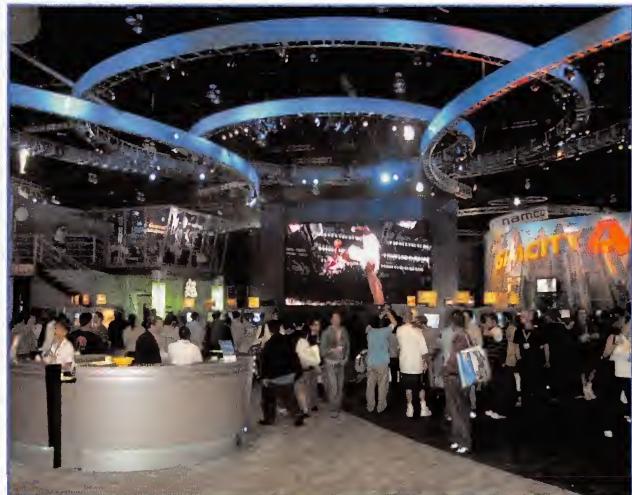
Freelancer for example already features over 2 hours of breathtaking cinematics.

The hot genre of E3 was the Massively Multiplayer Online Role Playing Game (MMORPG) where developers eager for monthly 'rent-cheques' were all proclaiming how their particular online formulae was superior to the competition. Many claims were made that the numerous flaws of current

online games have all been repaired and that fun shall prevail over drudgery.

As for the best of E3 (placing tongue firmly in cheek), it wasn't the incredible Dragons Lair 3D which is the ultimate realisation of real-time Laserdisk quality graphics. Rather Spring Break, or as our brilliant Art Director called it 'Sim Shag', where one creates an Ibiza style resort complete with wet t-shirt contests, talent competitions, DJ gigs, beach volleyball, party cruises, flirting and drunken brawls.

Jere Lawrence.





EARTH AND BEYOND



DEVELOPER

FA

URL

www.ea.com
RELEASED
Winter 2003



One genre above all others offers game companies the world over the ability to realise their ultimate profit dreams. That genre is Massively Multiplayer Online Role Playing Games (MMORPG) and Earth and Beyond (E&B) is Westwood's first undertaking into the lucrative online market.

For an online game, E&B is refreshingly different. Instead of using the traditional first-person role of the majority of MMORPGs, E&B places you inside your own starship with item accumulation and character progression based on ship upgrades rather than an individual. Just some of the item upgrades available are lasers (beam weapons), cloaking devices, shields, reactors, engines, hulls and more.

Within E&B there are three races: the Progen who, as master warriors, have the strongest ships and are bred for combat; Terrans are the masters of trade and have ships that can carry more cargo as well as starting in an area of space with already established trade routes; the third race, the Jenquai, are masters of exploration and have the fastest ships with specialised warp drives.

As well as the three races, the player can also pick between three different classes. Traders are masters of commerce and with a high negotiation skill, can make a lot of money as well as being able to produce the finest items in the galaxy. Warriors are supreme pilots whose skills all focus on

weapons and combat. Explorers have skills such as cloaking and hyperspace jumping that allow them to scout sectors safely as well as the ability to mine any of the numerous asteroids that exist in E&B.

Players however are not limited to just these three classes as hybridisation allows the creation of mixed characters. For example, a player who wants the strength of the Progen ships but prefers a more exploration-based gaming experience can create a Progen explorer. As hybrid classes lack a particular specialisation, the player has to play a less direct game. A Terran warrior would have higher negotiation skill to make more credits when selling cargo plundered from the destruction of mobs but would use a less powerful ship, making combat more dangerous.

As with all MMORPGs, the game begins with the creation of your character and E&B offers the most customisable avatars to date. There are numerous faces and hairstyles to choose from and you can even add micro-customisation in the form of scars and tattoos that can be sized and positioned anywhere on the character's face.

When starting out you can also customise the look of your ship by attaching different hulls and wing structures as well as placing decals on the ship. Not only does this supersede the newbie loin cloth and dagger sameness of other MMORPGs but instantly allows the player to express their own uniqueness right from the beginning of the game. So important was this aspect to Westwood that it hired Doug Chiang, the person responsible for ship design in Star Wars Episode 1, to create their ship models. The last stage of the character creation process, besides naming your pilot, allows you to also name your ship.

Even at the early stage of the E&B beta, getting into the game is easy and enjoyable. Gone are the days of wandering aimlessly trying to figure out what to do. E&B, from the first login, features a fully

interactive tutorial that guides you through the essential play aspects of the game as well as introducing its new MMORPG concepts.

Progressing through E&B is unique and refreshing. Instead of being entirely combat-based, it features three different experience tables that reward exploration, trade and combat. To gain exploration experience, the player need only explore new areas of the sector they're in. Gaining trading experience involves successfully flying a trade route and buying and selling items for profit. Finally, combat experience is rewarded with the destruction of enemies. With each "levelling up" on any



**E3
IN LA
H8
I9
J8
K7
L6
M5**



DOOM 3

Who could ever forget **Doom**? The sprite-based 2.5D first person shooter for the PC took gaming to new levels of graphical detail and playability. **Doom** brought an element to gaming that many have strived to reproduce even today. That element is atmosphere and the one common experience of players who played **Doom** when it first came out in 1993, is that it was the first game, ever, that could give you a damn good scare.

DEVELOPER

Id

URL

www.idsoftware.com

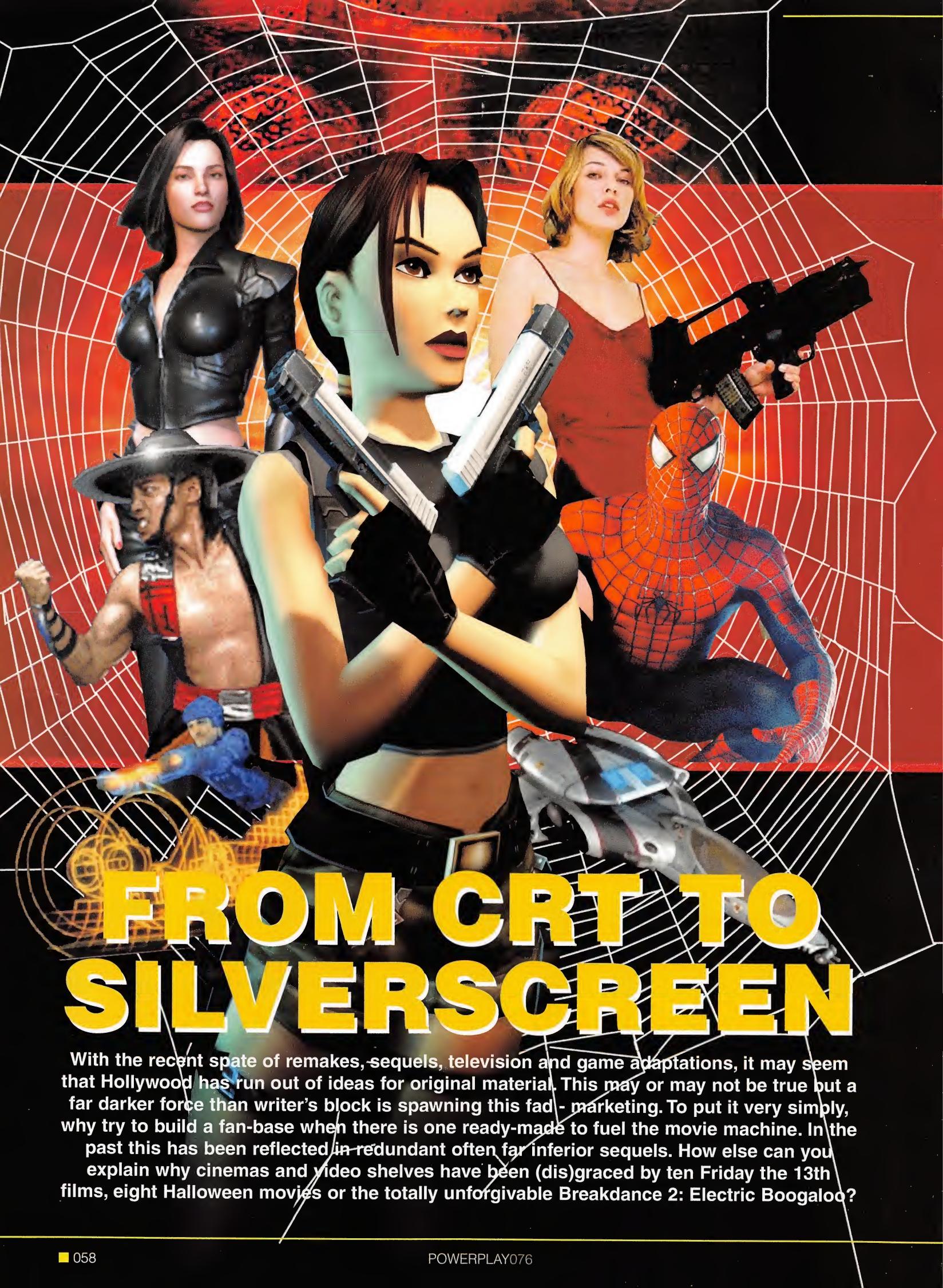
REL



December 10, 1994, marks the last time the world saw a Doom product from Id (Final Doom was produced by TeamTNT) and now, 8 years and three major 3D engines later, Id is revolutionising the "horror survival" genre with Doom III.

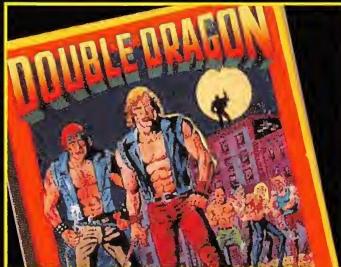
Upon watching the exclusive E3 Doom III demo, the first thing that hits you is the level of detail inherent in the new engine. Marines and other humans on the "doomed" Martian colony literally look like they're straight out of an animated 3D cartoon. For example, so detailed is the marine model that close examination of the face will not only reveal stubble but small inverted bump-mapped pockmarks.

By far the most impressive function of the new engine though is its advanced lighting. Monsters, besides having multiple texture layers, bump-mapping, pain-skinned and skeletal (bones) based motion captured animation, now offer one level of real-time ray tracing and cast mathematically accurate shadows. Doom 3 looks to once again push the 3D envelope and to learn more about it, we interviewed Robert Duffy, programmer, and Fred Nilsson, artist/ animator, from Id software.



FROM CRT TO SILVERSCREEN

With the recent spate of remakes, sequels, television and game adaptations, it may seem that Hollywood has run out of ideas for original material. This may or may not be true but a far darker force than writer's block is spawning this fad - marketing. To put it very simply, why try to build a fan-base when there is one ready-made to fuel the movie machine. In the past this has been reflected in redundant often far inferior sequels. How else can you explain why cinemas and video shelves have been (dis)graced by ten Friday the 13th films, eight Halloween movies or the totally unforgivable Breakdance 2: Electric Boogaloo?



Nearly ten years ago an eager young marketing executive for Hollywood Pictures had a bright idea and convinced a studio head that making a film version of one of the hottest video gaming licences around would be a good idea. Combine the awesome market potential of the game with the draw of big name actors and you'll have a surefire hit on your hands. Right? The resulting Super Mario Brothers film cost the studios a whopping \$US50 million to make (it was a lot at the time) and only made slightly over \$20 million at the box office. The reasons for failure were myriad but they didn't stop other production companies taking notes and releasing their own movies based on gaming franchises. In a few brief months a new genre was formed.

Teething Problems

Within a year, two more films were released by various companies in a fad spurred on by the popularity of martial arts actors such as Jean Claude Van Damme, Steven Seagal, Jeff Speakman and Brandon Lee.

Double Dragon and Street Fighter, released in 1993 and 1994, were massive box office flops, making a tiny \$2.431 million and \$33.423 million respectively. Neither film made back production costs at the cinemas, only breaking even on video rentals and sales. Both films suffered from the same problems that plagued Super Mario Brothers - artificially



injecting plot where there was none to begin with and having no respect for the source material.

Super Mario Brothers took the simple story of a heroic plumber saving a princess by jumping on the heads of monsters and turned it into a nightmarish mish-mash of slapstick comedy, inter-dimensional travel, super-evolved dinosaurs, a meteor, sexual innuendo and Dennis Hopper chewing up the scenery. Not once did the heroes jump on someone's head. It's understandable that the writers

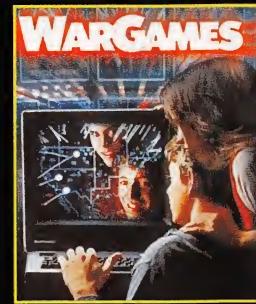
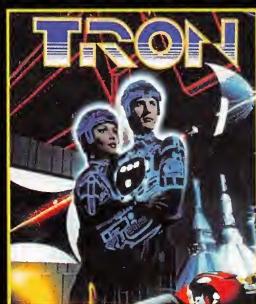
would want to add some depth to the story but killing what little there was altogether is unforgivable. Nintendo fans let their ire be felt in the takings. Double Dragon did away with the idea that the protagonists were tracking down a kidnapped girlfriend and added a mystical amulet, genetic engineering, insane pop-culture references and a post-apocalyptic



landscape. At least the producers were wise enough to keep the action at a fever pitch, unlike the abominable Street Fighter movie.

Fans were outraged by the lack of respect shown to the series. As everybody who has ever played the game knows, Street Fighter II is all about Ken and Ryu, two fighters challenging all the greatest fighters in the world to test their skill. For some reason (probably because Van Damme can't do an accent to save his life), Street Fighter: The Movie is all about

Guile (who is now French), a soldier for the UN looking to take down the evil warlord M. Bison. Ken and Ryu were gunrunners, Dhalsim a scientist, DeeJay a computer programmer and Blanka a genetic experiment. The flaws in the script are endless and to make matters worse, there were hardly any fight scenes to speak of. The lack of action can be put down to a number of contributing factors but the majority of the blame has to rest on the fact that the majority of the cast were legitimate (if terrible) actors. The majority of characters threw clumsy punches at each other or ran away. With the exception of M. Bison, no character used a special ability save a quick flash of Guile doing a backflip kick and throwing knives which were probably meant to be real-world representations of his Sonic Boom attack. Why take a game licence if they weren't going to use any of the game flavour? What were they thinking? They were thinking that the movie would be successful just because of the game fan-base. Boy were they wrong.



Tron

1982

Twenty years ago this film exhorted us to believe in the users. One of the first films to integrate computer games into the overall look and feel of the movie, Tron featured games and gameplaying as major plot points. It also foreshadowed many a game with its major villain being an evil computer.

The Last Starfighter

1984

Alex Rogan, trailer trash and general slacker, obsesses about the game, The Last Starfighter. Little does he know that the game is actually a test for potential pilots in the Star League. Faster than you can say, "first modern CGI movie," Alex is in space defending the frontier against Xur and the Kodan Armada.

Bishop of Battle

1983

Acting powerhouse Emilio Estevez stars as JJ Cooney, a loser obsessed with the game Bishop of Battle, in one of the stories in the Twilight Zone-esque Nightmares horror anthology. The game involves shooting vector-based enemies in a 2D maze with a light gun. He eventually gets trapped in the game but by that time you're so bored you no longer care.

The Wizard

1989

Everybody's favourite fat kid from The Wonder Years, Fred Savage, stars in this two-hour advertisement for Nintendo. Corey (Savage) takes his younger introspective brother, Jimmy on a cross-country trek to the Nintendo championships. Corey finds love, Jimmy comes out of his shell and they all learn a little something about themselves through gaming.

WarGames

1983

David Lightman, a teenage computer genius (Matthew Broderick) hacks into his favourite software developer's mainframe to check out their newest game lineup and is immediately taken by the game Global Thermonuclear War. Little does David know that he's actually hacked into NORAD and has set about a chain of events that could eventually lead to real nuclear war.



It Has Begun!

The next cab off the ranks got the formula right, mixing enough knowledge of the game and film-making techniques to create a successful little franchise. Mortal Kombat made more than triple its budget at the box office alone and paved the way for at least one sequel, an animated series and a live action TV series. It is obvious from watching the film that the writers and producers had looked at the previous gaming movies and were determined not to make the same mistakes. The premise of the game was people (and a few supernatural characters for good measure) beating the living snot out of each other to determine the fate of Earth and the movie delivered just that. Forgoing plot for action was the best thing that the producers could have done.

The film starts fast and continues at the same pace. We open on a fight scene, move on to a brief dialogue sequence, then to a fight scene and finally a gunfight. With a minimum of words and truckload of action all of the main characters are introduced. The rest of the film takes the same approach - any dialogue that's

delivered is a lead up to a fight scene. Little effort was put into giving any of the characters any actual depth. Liu Kang is cranky about the death of his brother, Johnny Cage doubts his abilities, Sonya Blade is afraid to ask for help, Shao Khan is evil and Raiden is Christopher Lambert. Lack of character in most movies is looked upon as a definite flaw -



how can we empathise with a character when they are little more than a cardboard cutout? But in a film such as Mortal Kombat any such empathy would get in the way of a good beating. Why should we want to know about Shao Khan's motivations for being evil? We played the game and acknowledged the fact that he's the bad guy. What more do we need to know?

Flawless Victory

Mortal Kombat made no pretensions about being anything

more than a film about fighting and as such retained the majority of things that made the game franchise so popular. Each major character showed at least one special move ranging from the mundane like Johnny Cage's Nut Cracker, to the ridiculous such as Sub-Zero freezing everything in sight. Though they look incredibly dated now (surpassed by most

game FMV) the special effects were state of the art and only added to the success. By employing a cast of relative unknowns who knew how to fight, more money could be focussed on the effects, allowing the film to contain characters such as Reptile and Prince Goro. The only gripe that fans of the game had was the fact that it contained none of the gory fatalities that made the game so popular. These had originally been planned but were dumped to lower the film's MPAA rating - fatalities would earn an R rating.

Fatality

All good things must come to an end and Mortal Kombat: Annihilation was released in 1997. A bigger budget and a few real actors elevated the production from being good dumb fun like the first film to a pretentious, muddled mess. Based upon the entire series rather than just a single game, Mortal Kombat: Annihilation tried to include all the characters to keep the fans happy, but pissed them off instead. Some characters were mentioned off the cuff - Striker, one of the most popular characters in the series was only mentioned in passing and that was to tell of his untimely death. Annihilation barely managed to break even at the box office but even so, the Mortal Kombat franchise (games, films, merchandising, TV) is worth more than \$US1.5 billion. Rumour has it that there will be a third Mortal Kombat film released next year containing all the elements of the game that were truly loved - special moves, animalities, babilities, friendship and fatalities. We'll just have to wait and see the quality of the final product.



Resident Evil

2002

Based on the popular survival horror franchise, Resident Evil sees super-sexy Milla Jovovich and Michelle Rodriguez battling to save Raccoon City from a deadly virus that creates zombies. A fun plot, great effects and a Romero-esque atmosphere combine to make Resident Evil one of the best movies based on games and a good film in its own right.



Tomb Raider

2001

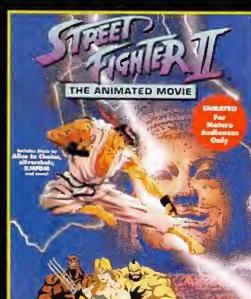
Angelina Jolie brings the exploits and cantilevered cleavage of Lara Croft to life in this fun but ultimately hollow adaptation of the Tomb Raider series of games. Gallivanting around the world to find a magical triangle and keep it from the hands of the illuminati may sound good on paper but it made for a rather dull film, though it did teach us that destroying historical monuments is a good thing.



Super Mario Brothers

1993

By trying to add plot where there was none, Super Mario Brothers became a total disaster. Dinosaurs from an alternate dimension kidnap a princess who has a stone that can unite the two worlds. Luigi, who is in love with the princess, rushes off to save her with older brother Mario hot on his heels. The good king is made of fungus. What the hell is going on here?



Street Fighter 2 Animated Movie

1995

Constant well-animated martial arts action highlights Street Fighter 2 the Animated Movie. The plot is basically non-existent - an evil warlord, Bison is kidnapping street fighters from around the globe to brainwash into becoming terrorist killing machines. A few heroic fighters, Ryu, Ken, Guile and Cammy, must stop his nefarious plans. Beautifully animated butt-kicking ensues.



Street Fighter 2 The Series

Various

All of your favourite characters from the classic arcade game come together for an orgy of martial arts mayhem as the fighters get embroiled in their own soap opera-like plot arcs and generally try to be the best of the best of the best. It may not be one of the most coherent stories ever but the sheer amount of action and the quality of animation makes the series a delight for anime fans.



Starfighters, Cleavage and Zombies. Oh My!

Advances in PC technology have lead to more intricate and interesting games. Gone are the days of simple platformers where jumping over pits and on the heads of enemies was the be all and end all experience. Now we have intricate plots, budgets that rival films and characters that become so famous they now have agents.

The first of the new crop of game adaptations came with the release of Wing Commander in 1999. Released just before The Phantom Menace, this \$30 million film made around \$50 million at the cinemas and proved to studio executives that Mortal Kombat wasn't just a fluke. Though the story and acting weren't anything to write home about, Wing Commander contained enough history and flavour taken from the game to keep the fans happy as well as appealing to a broader science-fiction audience. The success of Wing Commander gave rise to the best-known and ambitious of game adaptations - Tomb Raider. Angelina Jolie brought the world's most famous computer character to life in a film

that played like a modern Indiana Jones. Apart from Jolie's gravity-defying décolletage, little of Tomb Raider was evident in the film. The plot, action and characters could have been taken from any number of action/adventure films, which is perhaps the major element in the success of the film - it has an appeal that spans both players and the general public.

The survival horror genre has proven to be perfect for translating into movies. The genre contains all of the elements necessary to construct a coherent and internally consistent movie. Based around a strong central character, a locked box situation and an equal combination of tension, action and horror, Resident Evil gave Paul Anderson, the director of Mortal Kombat, another chance to help a game movie and proved so popular that a sequel is already in the works. The success of the film has also lead to other survival horror franchises being bought up by rival production houses. Within the next year we should see film versions of Nocturne, Alone in the Dark, Parasite Eve and House of the Dead.

It's obvious that movies based

on games are becoming more mainstream and accepted. The only question left is what genre is going to be the next one adopted?

Made in Japan

Hollywood doesn't have the monopoly on adapting games to film - Japan has been doing it for years in anime. In many ways animation is a superior format for bringing games to life as anything imaginable can be drawn with no additional budget costs. Doing a Street Fighter special move in a live action movie means having to fork out cash for the special effects. Doing it in anime simply means that one of the artists needs to draw it. The success of fighting games from giants such as Capcom and SNK has given rise to a huge number of cartoons based on them - Street Fighter II, Fatal Fury, Battle Arena Toshinden, Rival Schools, Night Stalkers, Samurai Showdown and Guilty Gear number but a few of the better ones.

The most notorious of cartoons based on games is undoubtedly Pokemon and it is also the best example of the strengths of animation. Pokemon 3: The Movie

cost a measly \$3 million to make and took over \$10 million on the opening weekend alone. Total grosses currently stand at around \$60 million including video rental. It may not seem like much money, but a live action film would need a budget of around \$35-\$60 million (using CGI/live action films such as Dungeons & Dragons for reference). To put this in perspective, a live action film would have to make \$700 million to show the same type of profit margin. As it stands, a live action film would only barely break even a year after the release of the film.

Three years in the making and costing \$137 million, Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within stands out as something of an oddity. Co-produced by the development house responsible for the immensely successful series of games, SquareSoft, The Spirits Within is a standalone production not featuring any characters or plots from the franchise. This fact caused a great deal of confusion amongst cinema patrons who were expecting something more in line with the games and the film failed to make back half its production costs at the box office as a result.



Street Fighter 2 Alpha

1999

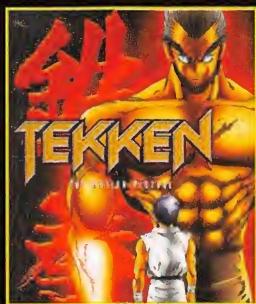
Another animated Street Fighter movie. Ryu is visited by a long lost younger brother and must battle with the anger inside himself so as not to give in to the Dark Hadou and become like the killer Gouki. Other characters appear in an illegal fighting tournament that a scientist is using to make himself the most powerful fighter ever. The best-scripted and adult Street Fighter movie so far.



Street Fighter

1994

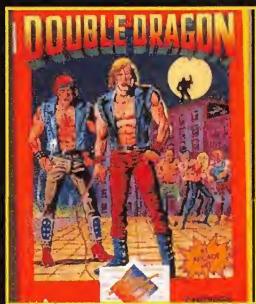
Unfortunately this movie was Raul Julia's last role, but at least he had fun doing it. Julia is Bison, an evil and truly insane warlord. Jean Claude Van Damme is his incoherent and incredibly annoying nemesis. Stupid plotting and reliance on stupid comedy instead of action caused Street Fighter to flop at the box office sparing us from a sequel.



Tekken Animated

1998

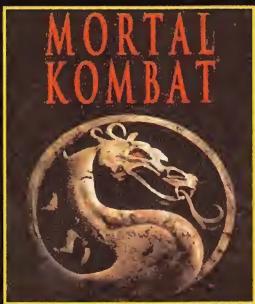
Dull and ultimately uninspired, Tekken tells the "story" of a tournament and the fighters who attend. Fun to watch for a while but incredibly forgettable, Tekken: The Motion Picture features all of the characters from the game making it one of the more complete anime offerings.



Double Dragon

1993

Two brothers, Billy and Jimmy Lee must fight the evil Koga Shuko to avenge the murder of their friend Satori and retrieve part of a magical amulet known as the Double Dragon. Eschewing plot for fight scenes and clever pop-culture references, Double Dragon manages to transcend its minuscule budget and be a lot of (dumb) fun.



Mortal Kombat

1995

Mortal Kombat got the formula for a movie based on a fighting game right by injecting about ten minutes of plot into 90 minutes of butt-kicking. Liu Kang must save the Earth from the forces of Outworld by beating people up. There's not much more plot than that. Look out for Christopher Lambert cast as an Asian thunder god. What the hell were they thinking?



Based on the hit film...

No look at movies based on games would be complete without a look at the flipside - games based on movies. Ironically, most characters suffer from an equal and opposite problem to movies based on games. Whereas the majority of gaming movies fail by artificially injecting plot where there was none before, games based on movies often fail due to the fact that the majority of games need to reduce the amount of plot and increase the amount of action to keep gamers happy. The eventual outcome is usually far inferior than the premise.

Take for example Total Recall. The movie managed to be simultaneously action-packed AND have a decent and compelling plot involving implanted memories, alien conspiracies, Mars mining colonies and mutants. On the other hand the game was reduced to being a totally uninspired platformer/beat-em-up featuring a cast of Wilfred Brimley lookalikes and bearded midgets in pink tracksuits. Where were the plot twists? Where were the intimidating enemies? Most importantly, where was the three-

breasted prostitute? What is Total Recall without a woman with too many boobies? Nothing but a poor excuse to cash in on a successful title, that's what. Total Recall is but one example of a poor cash-in game. There are many others. ET The Extra Terrestrial is considered the worst game of all time and The Last Action Hero isn't regarded as being much better.

On a different note, the single most redundant and oddly recursive game based on a film came in late 1994 with the release of Street Fighter: The Movie - The Game, the first (and hopefully the last) game based on a film based on a game. Street Fighter: The Movie - The Game managed to take everything that was right with both the movie and game on which it was based, throw them out the window and make a crap sandwich with what was left. The resulting game substituted the smooth character animations of the arcade game with choppy, poorly digitised images of the actors from the film. The game moved so slowly that it was nearly impossible to play. It didn't last at the arcades for too long and mercifully there doesn't seem to be any evidence of a

console port. Street Fighter: The Movie - The Game is the greatest example of a poor adaptation of a film there is and just goes to prove that people will do anything, no matter how stupid it sounds, if they think it can make a buck.

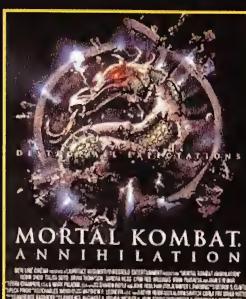
Evolution

Unlike the earlier crop of games, many of the modern adaptations of films are as equally entertaining as their big screen counterparts. With the advance in special effects technology and processing power, movies and games are becoming more like each other. The average gamer expects more from a game today than they did ten years ago - better graphics, better gameplay and better scripting. Due to these expectations developers can now retain or replicate much of the film and in some circumstances add more to make the game a standalone product. Two great examples of this are Blade Runner and the recently released Spider-Man: The Movie. Blade Runner took what was good from the film - future noir setting, replicants, corruption, paranoia - and created an entirely new interactive story to play. Spider-Man takes a more

direct approach, following the plot of the game but adding more enemies and gameplay modes to keep the player interested. Both games are based on movies but due to their sophistication, can stand as games in their own right, not merely a tie-in.

The Future

As games and movies become more intertwined the next logical step in the evolution would be interactive movies. There are already a small number of interactive DVD movies/games on the market, allowing the viewer/player to choose the next scene from a selection. This formula is necessarily very limited by the fact that only a set number of scenes can be shot and scripted. Combine the current crop of video cards which can output graphics comparable to the CGI of a few years ago with the increasingly more literate game scripts like Deus Ex or Planescape: Torment and the final result will be nothing less than a real time, fully 3D animated interactive movie. With any luck there's some developer out there right now thinking about how to do just that.



Mortal Kombat 2: Annihilation

1997

Liu Kang must save the Earth again in this doggedly poor follow up to the 1995 hit film, Mortal Kombat. James Remar replaces Christopher Lambert as Raiden. Why they couldn't cast an Asian guy to play an Asian god is beyond me. The inclusion of "animalities" makes for an interesting diversion but it's ultimately rather boring.



Fatal Fury: The Motion Picture

1994

Actually the third Fatal Fury movie, The Motion Picture was the first to be released in the west. Fatal Fury tells the story of Joe Higashi, Mai Shiranui and Terry and Andy Bogard rushing to stop the villainous Laocorn from collecting all of the Armour of Mars and becoming a god. Great animation and a good plot combine to make this one of the best game adaptations and a good anime in its own right.



Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within

2001

Though based on a game franchise, Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within has standalone plot and characters, separate from any of the Squaresoft games. Though the plot, which deals with alien ghosts, the power of the Earth and all-consuming love, may be a little too Japanese for some, there's no doubt that the animation is some of the greatest ever seen.



Wing Commander

1999

Pilots Blair, Angel and Madman must team up to stall the evil leonine Kilrathi so the Earth has time to ready its defenses. Some thrilling starfighter combat sequences didn't make up for universally poor performances from the actors involved and some truly shonky alien costumes. The games were far better.



Future Cops (Chao ji xue xiao ba wang)

1993

Undoubtedly the oddest film based (in part) on the Street Fighter franchise, Future Cops involves slapstick comedy, time travel, schoolyard antics and fart jokes. Ryu, Dhalsim and Vega travel back in time to find the evil Bison, his henchmen Ken and Sagat and befriend a nerdy school kid along the way. Very funny but very very odd.



STARWARS

EPISODE II

ATTACK OF THE GAMES

Maybe it's just the cynic in me speaking but upon recently watching Star Wars Episode 2: Attack of the Clones, four scenes immediately stood out as being perfect for translating into games. With the strong influence Lucas Arts has had on the gaming world in the past with hits such as X-Wing, X-Wing vs Tie Fighter, Dark Forces, Jedi Knight, Jedi Knight 2: Jedi Outcast, Jedi Starfighter, Galactic Battlegrounds and a host of others, you have to wonder whether George Lucas deliberately constructed the scenes for merchandising and game spin-off purposes. Whilst these scenes (for the most part) added to the continuity and overall spectacle of the film, they definitely stood out as being specific showcases of a different style of game.

To begin, there is a chase

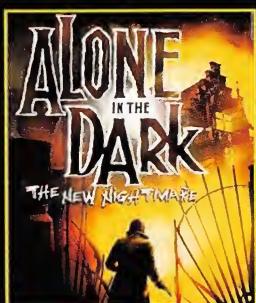
scene involving speeders in the hectic airborne traffic of Coruscant. Obi Wan and Anakin jump in a speeder to chase an assassin after foiling an attempt on the life of Senator Amidala. The chase winds through the skyways of the city-planet, sweeping around enormous buildings and ducking through traffic at every turn. The scene is thrilling to be sure but ultimately becomes quite redundant considering that the chase ends with just a little information passing between the characters. The same story progression could have been achieved with less technical wizardry and far more cohesive scripting but the chase remains. With the recent release of games such as New York Race (based upon a similar scene in The Fifth Element) and Beam

Breakers, it appears that Lucas has a ready-made fan-base for a ready-made racing game.

Without a doubt, the next starfighter combat game from Lucas Arts will involve a small ship passing through an asteroid belt closely followed by the imposing and impressively armed Slave 1. Why? Well, a lengthy scene shows just that in Episode 2. Obi Wan has the tables turned on him when the ship he is following manages to get the drop on him. Jango Fett launches a torpedo at the fleeing Obi Wan and looks on in delight as a huge explosion fills his viewing screen. Of course Obi Wan is not dead and goes on to (partially) save the day. Whilst this particular scene does add to the narrative it has to be wondered why Lucas didn't use some of the interesting plot arcs that could have been developed. Obi Wan is supposedly dead yet when he reappears no one is at all surprised. Is the fact that this point isn't played upon a sign of laziness on Lucas' part or is it a sign that nobody cares because starfighter combat is cool?

Next we enter the arena in

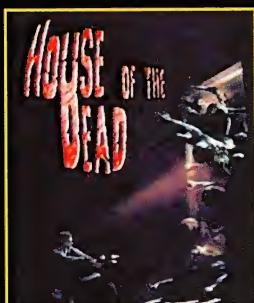
which Obi Wan, Anakin and Amidala are to be executed. This scene does eventually lead to the climax but before that we have a lengthy fight scene between a couple of Jedi, the regal companion and some ferocious looking beasties. If there isn't a Star Wars arena combat game on our shelves within 12 months, we'll eat out hats. Finally we have the icing on the cake - the battle between the clone troopers and the droid army. Out of all of the scenes mentioned, this one is the most plot-specific and game-specific. We have two definite sides, each with truly "buildable" troops. If we reach out with the force we can all get a strong sense that there's a new Star Wars RTS on the way. Clone Wars anyone?



Alone in the Dark

2003

Based on the survival horror game franchise, Alone in the Dark will feature a male protagonist trapped in a haunted house fighting off various zombies, demons and other assorted beasties that go bump in the night. Few details have been released as yet but the recent success of Resident Evil should push forward the production schedule.



House of the Dead

2003

Produced by Mindfire Entertainment, House of the Dead will take a departure from the plot of the game and feature a cast of teenage vigilantes fighting against fast-moving, martial arts-fighting undead from hell. It may not have the strongest of plots but the premise sounds cool as hell. My personal tip for the feelgood hit of 2003.



Tekken

2003

With an estimated budget of \$60 million, Tekken will be one of the biggest budget martial arts films ever to grace the silver screen. No details about the production (other than price tag) have been released at this stage but fingers and toes are firmly crossed that it doesn't turn out to be another Street Fighter-like stinker.



Dead or Alive

2003

Produced by those crazy cats down at Mindfire Entertainment, Dead or Alive will have a modest budget of around \$20 million and feature a cast of no-name actors, each with substantial martial arts skill. That's the plan at least. The question remains as to whether the budget will be enough to cover the boob jobs necessary for all the female cast members to resemble their characters.



Resident Evil 2: Nemesis

2003

Set directly after the events of the first movie, Nemesis will feature a scantily clad Milla Jovovich fighting against hordes of shambling dead in an apocalyptic Raccoon City. Other characters will be introduced to help our gun-toting heroine blast zombies to hell and face off against the titular Nemesis creature.

*ON THE QUEST FOR ANSWERS
AND ADVENTURE YOU WILL
EXPLORE NEW COUNTRIES
MEET NEW PEOPLE...*

*...AND FACE AN
ANCIENT THREAT!*

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JoWood
Productions

IN REVIEW

The most authoritative reviews around

GAMESPC

A

Another month has come and gone

and brought with it a host of much anticipated games, three of which have made frequent appearances in the AMW charts. The big news of the month is the release of Morrowind, a game that ranks up there with Neverwinter Nights and Deus Ex 2 as one of the most anticipated role playing games of the year. Was it worth the hype? Hell yeah, and then some. The mixture of non-linear storytelling, beautiful graphics and compelling characters will have me glued to my monitor for many a sleepless night.

This month is also one of controversy - both GTA3 and Soldier of Fortune 2 have come under fire from various groups for being too violent, too sexual or just too anti-social for common consumption. As has been proven many times in the past, controversy is simply fuel for publicity - look in any gaming mag and both games will be featured somehow. The Australian version of GTA3 may have been cut of a little footage but do you think that it will hurt the sales figures? We seriously doubt it. Likewise Soldier of Fortune 2 has been savaged for being too violent and gory. The solution to this problem is simple - if you don't want gore and violence don't bloody play a gory and violent game. There's still no word from the AFTRS (Australian Film and Television Rating Service) as to whether an R18+ rating will be instituted for games but I sincerely hope it will happen. If nothing else it'll help stop people whining that their kids are being corrupted by a game.

OK, I'm off my soapbox now, sorry about the rant. This month also saw the release of Spider-Man at the cinemas and the game based on the movie. My love of comics is sated for a while. Now all I have to do is wait for the release of The Hulk or League of Extraordinary Gentlemen or Birds of Prey or Iron Man or Constantine or Batman: Year One or Iron Fist or Ghost Rider or X-Men 2 or Hell Boy or...

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THE PCPP REVIEW RATINGS SYSTEM



90+ Gold Award. A classic - everyone will love this game.

89-80 A strong title that's hard to fault. But perhaps not the best in its field.

79-60 Competent and playable. For fans of the genre.

59-40 Decidedly average, probably boring.

39-0 A dog. Bad, shamelessly unoriginal, cheap and horrible. Avoid.

Need The minimum requirements to get the game running at a playable speed.

Want The ideal system requirements for the game.

For The major reasons why you'll like the reviewed game.

Against The major reasons why you won't.



66 Morrowind
70 Grand Theft Auto 3
74 Soldier Of Fortune 2
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78 Cultures 2
79 Hotel Giant



Morrowind

It's big. Really, really big



DETAILS

DEVELOPER
Bethesda
PUBLISHER
ZeniMax Media
DISTRIBUTOR
Electronics Boutique
PRICE
\$99.95
RATING
M 15+
AVAILABLE
Now

NOTE

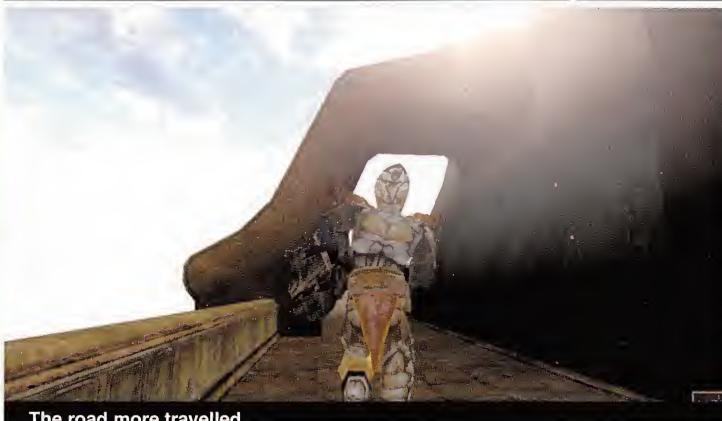
While the official distributor of Morrowind is Electronics Boutique, we obtained our review copy from Thumper's Game Zone of Victoria, who can be contacted on thumpers@acepia.net.au or on 03 9725 0833. Thanks as always, Thumper!



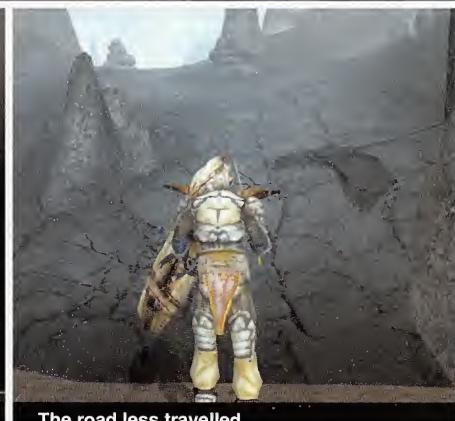
And so through the Sphincter of truth...



For sale. Two bedrooms, spacious garage, kick-arse gaming



The road more travelled



The road less travelled

SYSTEM

NEED
Duron 1GHz
128MB RAM
64MB GeForce2
1GB HDD

WANT
AthlonXP 1800+
256MB RAM
GeForce4
1GB HDD

Graphics, freedom and scope. These three things define the essence of Morrowind.

Normally, I'd beat around the bush a bit more than that. I'd tell you about the history of Bethesda and of the second Elder Scrolls game and how it was as frustrating to play as it was revolutionary.

That's all in the normal scheme of things, but Morrowind is no normal game. It is so over-endowed in the monumental RPG qualities of player choice and scale that it takes almost the whole canvass to paint a fair impression.

A stunning other-place

I'll start with the graphics because they are the easiest to picture, especially with the help of glowing words and screen shots.

They are awesome. This game looks great on a first-person shooter scale, which for a role-playing game, puts it off the Richter scale.

The level of detail throughout the world is amazing. It takes a while to get used to walking up to guards and seeing all the ridges in their armour, or looking at the intricate carvings

which covers the walls of the temples of the old gods.

The developers have used lens flares, real-time shadows, weather, night and day cycles, coloured lighting (lava illumination is unsettling at the best of times), reflections and, most importantly, a healthy dose of imagination.

You start wondering what the blasted Ashlands will look like in a dust storm or what the giant mushroom towers of the Wizard Kings of the Telvanni look like at dusk.

What about the lower levels of the ruined Ald Sotha or the heart of the deadly Red Mountain? Graphics that are so good they fire the imagination seems to be an odd contradiction, but that's what the team at Bethesda has managed.

Choose (a) Life

From the outset the onslaught of choice begins. You can create a character by answering ten moral questions and having a class assigned to you, by choosing a class or by handpicking your skills and abilities. Character classes consist of five major and five minor class skills

and an area of specialisation: combat, magic or stealth. Then there are the 10 races and the 13 birth signs that offer special bonuses.

Fireball-slinging warriors, secret agents and enchanters test-piloting their own sorcerous heavy armour creations are all possible. You can combine skills at random if you really want, but unless you have a super-keen imagination, this might make working out a character identity tricky. Without this notion of identity the free-form nature of the game might leave you a tad lost.

Are you the type of character who would assassinate the town mayor to climb a rung in the thieves' guild? Are you one of the rebels or the Empire? What are your goals?

You could spend half a game researching alchemy, trying to find a cure for the allegedly incurable blight. You could spend your time climbing to the top of the assassins' guild or creating a magical sword so fine that it makes Excalibur look like an over-publicised bread knife.

You can play Morrowind whatever way you like. Do you want to plunge into the central story and save the

SPELLING IT OUT

The spell system in Morrowind offers almost endless permutations. It's based on effects like fire damage, paralysis, shielding, spell absorption, telekinesis, attribute increases, invisibility, flight which can all be combined to make individual spells. You can also set the magnitude of each effect, the duration it lasts and the area it affects.



Once you have all the elements you want to throw together, you find a spellmaker to help compose a spell, then you set the parameters and pay the huge gold cost and *voila!* Then if you're feeling really cheeky, go and enchant your favourite plumed hat with it. Then you can take over the Great Houses with your Great Hat! Imagine their embarrassment.



I think this is where they filmed Gummy Bears



Anyone seen my giant muffins?

land or let it all burn as you follow your own petty obsessions?

Character advancement backs this 'come as you are, play as you want' approach. Character levels are not based on kills - they are based on skills. Raise ten major or minor skills through use, training or instructional texts and you're up a character level. Having a merchant or thief means that you can concentrate on money or theft, and not killing rats for the meagre EXP they provide.

This freedom is possible because of the sheer number of quests available. The game follows a strict policy that it's not a foul unless the ref sees it. If you kill the mayor in his house with no one around to report it, then no one knows it was you. If you wanted to you could make a character with the goal of being a burglar of legend and advance levels by robbing every house, in every town you go through, culminating in trying to rob the vaults of the three Great Houses. You're free to be who you want to be. You'd never have to play a main storyline mission or join a single guild. On the other hand...

Power games

One of the most fascinating things about Morrowind is the power struggle between the various factions in operation. If you decide to join one of these factions, you will start having a role in the shifting balances of power, which will totally change the scope you operate on.

“If you kill the mayor in his house with no one around to report it, then no one knows it was you.”

Things get interesting when you play several sides at once. My character, for example, was in the Mage's Guild, Thieves' Guild, the Imperial Spy Network and House Hlaalu and was rising up the ranks of all of them. He was getting missions, cheap training, accommodation, inside information and making friends in every major city. The only limitations to this are, 1) you can only work for one of the three Great Houses and, 2) your activities for one faction may conflict with one of your other factions, but if you do things on the sly you can get away with murder, literally.

Being involved in the guilds and with the Empire slowly unfolds a rich world of opportunities and a huge tale just waiting to fall. The Great Houses are at war. You learn of the unrest and secret societies trying to overthrow imperial rule. There are ancient cults at work summoning old gods. Who will you help?

All the while, the storms from Red Mountain are getting worse, spreading the incurable blight...

There is so much cooking under the surface that the story and the ultimate role you will choose to play in it keeps you trudging through swamps and taking arcane missions.

What sets these missions apart from the usual RPG fare are the unexpected complications and the ability to solve the problems in a number of ways depending on your skills, smarts and patience.

Running out of quests is an accomplishment in itself, and the game doesn't stop when you

IN CONTROL

Morrowind floors you with its world and choice. In amongst all of this glory you don't want to be bogged down with a control scheme that rivals an Apache Helicopter in complexity.

Bethesda knows this.

The controls are simple, with a standard key/mouse combination for movement and nine hotkeys which can be assigned to ready any skill, spell or item. Right clicking brings up the inventory, skill, magic and map screens, each of which can be resized to your liking.

The map function helps no end. It shows your orientation, marks areas of interest that you have found and has a local and world setting. When exploring the lonely roads it's your favourite companion.



Close the blast hatches!



Perhaps it'll be worth striking for an eight-hour day



Magic and mushrooms

resolve the central storyline. There are even some quests which only you can handle with your new power and prestige.

A whole world out there

On your way to the top you will travel the length of Morrowind. Although the world is broken into a lot of little areas separated by a few seconds of loading, it is possible to walk across the whole land mass. It is a continuous world. It is massive, probably excessive. Morrowind will provide you with hundreds of hours of gaming.

"Quests, bribes, what you're wearing and eloquent speeches can all change how people see you."

There are more than 1000 NPCs, 400 quests (not including ones you set for yourself), 300 dungeons, 70 multi-tiered complex shrines, prisons and mines, 70 ingredients for alchemy (goodness knows how many combinations that allows), 35 cities and towns, and 13 factions (including secret societies).

The impressive thing is the detail crammed into all this scale. Using

the mighty Morrowind editor to quickly create vast areas of game-world has allowed Bethesda to pack detail and unique elements into every nook and cranny.

To find all of these secret temples, off-the-map ruins, members of secret societies and certain quests, you'll have to wander the countryside like Caine from Kung-Fu.

If you have somewhere you really need to be, wandering can be time consuming. The walking speed is pedestrian indeed and running tires you out so you can hardly swing a blade.

For people without the time to sightsee there are rapid transport options available. They are: teleporting between mage guilds, hopping a boat and the Silt Striders (think giant fleas on stilts). Between these three options most cities are linked together (with some notable exceptions). There are also a few spells available fairly early on which will bounce you out of (or back into) trouble.

A lonely world

If Morrowind has a major flaw, it's that sometimes it feels a little lonely. This is heightened by the lack of a real companion or group. The whole world is your oyster but no-one else seems to have access to it in the same way you do.

For one, the other inhabitants of Morrowind don't interact with the world half as well as you. Store people tend their shops 24 hours a day. Many characters don't move from their spot so you can always find them.

Although it would have been a pain when you needed that healing potion 'stat', it would have made the world come alive to have shop people who went to bed, re-decorated or worked shifts. Getting someone out of bed at 4am to buy a prettier hat or sell a rusty knife would have been as much fun as it was dangerous. Even something simple like NPCs having a task or two per location that you could interrupt would at least have helped with the illusion that the people weren't just waiting for you.

On a similar note, NPCs will sometimes act like they are just part of



That pillar seems to have sprouted foliage



Wake up! Time to die.



Nice of you to wait around, you ugly NPC

the scenery, which is at odds with the generally pretty good AI. A highwayman in one section only tries robbing you if you talk to him. A Witch Hunter will watch you run around him, getting killed by some abomination, without raising a sword. If you kill the mayor without anyone seeing you, you seem to get off scot-free (unless you need the mayor later on) and so on.

Then there's the dialogue. All the important info is delivered as text, in a branching text tree, with the answers and level of information determined by how much the person you're talking to likes you. Quests, bribes, what you're wearing and eloquent speeches can all change how people see you.

Once you have wrung out a dialogue option with one character, you can bring it up with pretty much anyone... which leads to a problem. People like to say the same thing, over and over.

With well over a thousand NPCs, Bethesda can be excused for doubling up on some information but it's very weird that the stuck-up Councillor for the exotic and powerful wizard kings says exactly the same thing as the dirty

fisherman in the starting village.

On the other hand, when you hit the Latest Rumours tab and you don't get the same hackneyed phrase about worn armour not working as well, it is pretty exciting. Although you do get a feel for certain characters via their look, introductory words and even the dialogue tree, having them produce rote answers from the hive mind can knock the atmosphere out of your sails.

All of these little things make you occasionally feel like a giant in a world full of shadowy half-people. But then again, being the chosen one and all, maybe that's how it should be.

The only other niggles are a journal that doesn't differentiate between active and completed quests (it tends to get a little hard to follow), and the omission of an enemy health bar or any other visual signs of damage which makes combat an odd leap of faith.

RPG goodness

Overall, Morrowind is a gaming experience. It gives players an unprecedented level of freedom while having an impressive store of major and minor story arcs, quests and

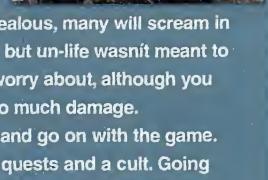
CREATURES OF THE BITE

Do you want to join the legions of the undead, in style? Like capes and expressive dental work? Become a vampire! You'll love the night-life.

Your strength and speed will jump through the roof. You can suck life right out of people. You become mega-powerful and ultra-cool. Sure, lots of people will be jealous, many will scream in fear and others will try to kill you on sight - but un-life wasn't meant to be easy. There's also the daylight thing to worry about, although you can move about on cloudy days without too much damage.

Morrowind lets you contract vampirism and go on with the game. Apparently there are even hidden vampire quests and a cult. Going this path might make you mighty but it also makes completing the central quest mighty tough with the running and screaming thing.

Although vampirism is rare and having people survive an encounter long enough to contract vampirism is rarer, it's just another example of letting people play the characters they want to play.



RATING

FOR

- Stunning graphics, design and atmosphere
- Longevity
- Sprawling plot and intrigue

AGAINST

- NPCs limited
- Some phrases of dialogue too common
- Journal gets cluttered

OVERALL

For scale, options and graphical glory Morrowind is an RPG beacon of light.

92

Timothy C Best

Grand Theft Auto 3

Antisocial dross or truly free-form gaming?

DETAILS

DEVELOPER

Rockstar

PUBLISHER

Take 2

DISTRIBUTOR

Take 2

PRICE

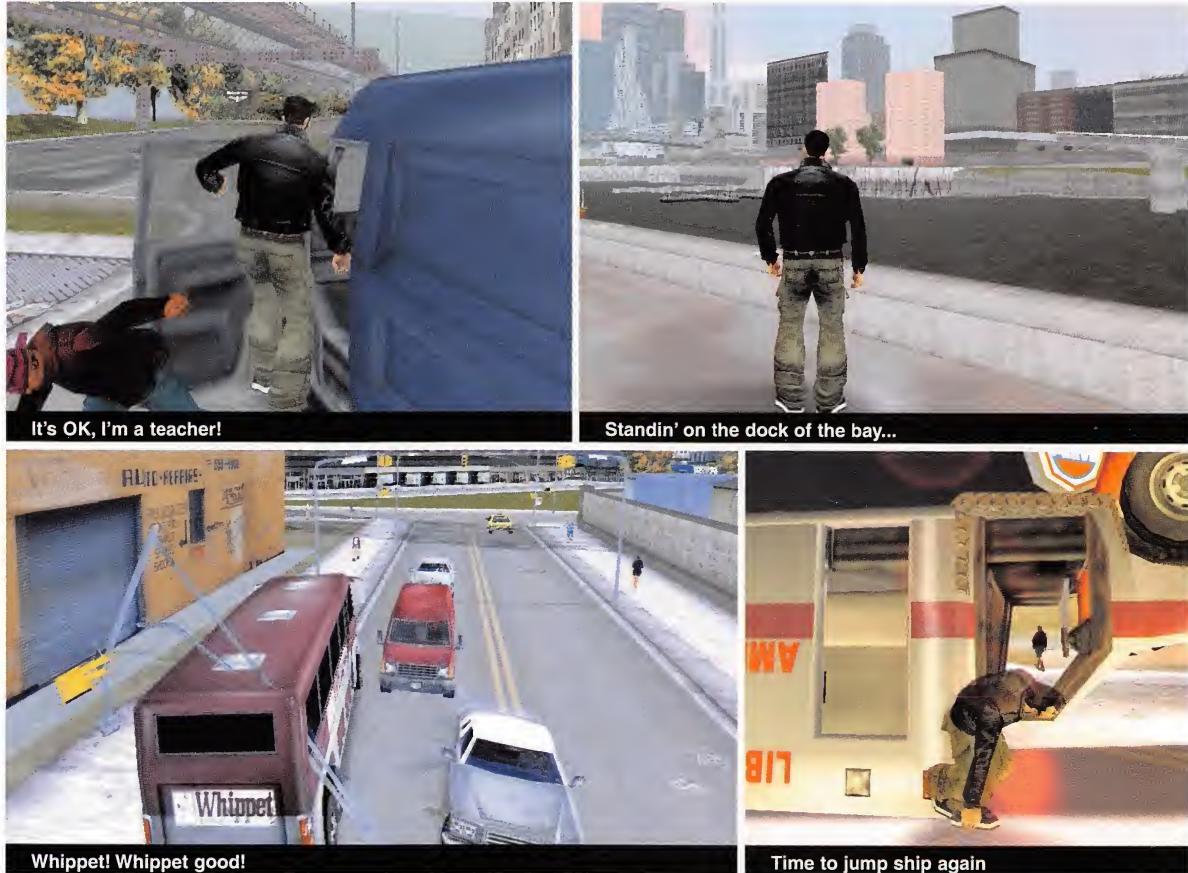
\$89.95

RATING

MA15+

AVAILABLE

Now



SYSTEM

NEED

Pentium III 450
64MB RAM
32MB GeForce2
500MB HDD

WANT

Pentium III 600
128MB RAM
64MB GeForce2
GTS
500MB HDD

So here it is at last. The latest in a string of 'controversial' games fresh from the PS2 and ready to outrage, offend and corrupt. This is a tweaked, sanitised version of GTA3, where prostitutes can no longer be solicited and nobody ever really dies, they just lie in the street until the paramedics arrive and magically revive them. So while outrage and offence is all but guaranteed, the same is not so easily said for an enriching gameplay experience.

GTA3 is freeform gaming, executed deftly, if not spectacularly. Taking the role of a nameless thug with a troubled criminal history, the player must make a name for himself (there is no option to play a female character) in big bad Liberty City. While a few not-so-subtle hints about how to get started are dropped, what to do next is largely up to the player. Fortune, if not fame, can be found by simply beating passers-by to the ground and stealing their money. If that seems a little low-brow, steal a taxi and drive passengers short distances for exorbitant fees. Or perhaps the life of a vigilante seems more promising: relieve a cop of his

cruiser and take the law into a more active and immediate arena. Perhaps fighting fires sounds more fun, or carrying wounded civilians to hospital.

Because every vehicle in GTA3 can be stolen, the variety of activities in the game is quite wide. There are no set goals or time limits, beyond the clock on taxi missions and, in fact, it is possible to simply drive around and around and around indefinitely, watching the commerce of the streets.

Liberty City is broken into three chunks and as the game begins, the main bridge to Staunton Island (the equivalent of New York's Manhattan)

"Complete with wildly swaggering gangsters, lecherous mafia dons and seductive femmes fatale."

has been destroyed, ironically by the main player character, limiting activities to the smaller dockside areas of Portland. However, as more missions are unlocked and special tasks are completed, Staunton Island and the swanky Shoreside Vale become accessible and the plot of the game begins to unfold.

Like Privateer so many moons ago, there is a central narrative to GTA3, but even finding it in the first place is a task in itself. There are basically three broad types of activity in the game: the simple random tasks that can be undertaken at any time, such as taxi, paramedic and vigilante missions, which result in small cash rewards and lots of property damage. Then there are the incidental narrative missions, where it is necessary to perform slightly more complex tasks, such as delivering a crooked businessman's bank manager to his remote lock-up so the loan repayments can be, uh, renegotiated. These missions generally

award the player with more cash and other bonuses such as weapons. Finally there are the missions which unlock new NPCs and other areas of the game and unravel the mystery surrounding the player.

The main missions are introduced via slick in-engine cut scenes, complete with wildly swaggering gangsters,



'Killing' innocents in a battered panda = heaven



Mafioso massacre... Is don, is bad



Homicide - Death on the Streets



Guiding lights

MORAL TURPITUDE

So you're an advocate for social justice. So you were one of those people who tried to get Baise-Moi and Lolita banned. So you ring up the radio every time Alan Jones says "bum". So the question you're asking is should you buy GTA3 for your kids?

Seriously though, in keeping with its predecessors and such landmark titles as Carmageddon and Postal, GTA3 did spend the early weeks of its PS2 distribution in the 'too naughty' basket up at the OFLC. The combination of high crime, loose women, vehicle-related mayhem and the ability to machine gun old ladies in the street generated a lot of publicity for the game and meant that every teen in the country with access to a chipped PS2 played it.

Oddly enough though, GTA3 in its PC iteration is not a particularly violent game. Certainly, the themes of gang war and organised crime are violent, but the execution is suitably cartoonish and, well, game-like. Plowing through a group of

pedestrians sends them scattering in all directions and most of them will happily jump back to their feet and continue their business. It is possible to beat people to 'death' in the street, resulting in a spreading pool of blood and a cash payout, but these people are then almost immediately revived by paramedics who swoop to the rescue in a big white ambulance... which you can steal.

All in all, GTA3 is less violent and less antisocial than most of the movies currently available at Video Ezy. The vehicle-related death and mayhem is trivial compared to that seen in films such as Ronin and Heat, in both of which Robert De Niro happily machine-guns innocent passers-by by accident as he pursues his plot-driven aims. Worried parents should be more concerned at the game's simplicity and lack of complex tasks rather than its violence, and those of you who are thinking of buying it for yourselves, well as Jiminy Cricket said, let your conscience be your guide.

lecherous mafia dons and seductive femmes fatale. After a mission is activated, the save-system is disabled

and the mission script begins to run. Completing the tasks of the mission results in a cash reward and a new

mission. And so repeat.

After a handful of missions are won it becomes apparent that each task follows pretty much the same formula: drive somewhere, pick something up or kill something, drive to a different place, repeat, drive somewhere else and the mission is over. However, it is to the credit of the developers that the missions manage to remain engaging, despite being essentially repetitive. Thanks to clever writing, a cast of cartoonish but still interesting characters and attention to detail (such as a familiar location sporting a sign advertising the Police Ball) there is real incentive to complete each mission, if only to see what crazy antisocial thing your underworld bosses will have you do next.

Atmosphere is GTA3's main strength. From the garish neon signs of the Red Light District to the pools of grease and giant container ships down by the docks, from the paper lanterns of Chinatown to the mountain of tyres at the wrecking yards, Liberty City is real. The atmosphere of the environment combines with a dynamic weather system that can simulate



The wife is going to KILL me!



Drive remote control car under mafia car, detonate, repeat...



Just like back home in Belfast



Yoink!

RACISM?

Oddly enough it isn't the ability to run down little old ladies that offended this reviewer, but the fact that every single cab driver in the whole of Liberty City is a turbanned Indian, complete with hokey accent. After a little more play, however, it becomes obvious that every 'type' of citizen has the one skin - all the Diablos gangmembers look the same, all the Mafia standover men look the same and all the dumb-ass pickup-driving rednecks look the same. At the very least, it makes people easy to identify as you hurtle toward their unprotected bodies at 80 miles an hour.

everything from bright sunshine to a thick, soupy fog. Also, on decent systems (anything with a beefy GeForce2 or higher) the view distance is more or less unlimited, and it's possible to stand on the foreshore of Portland and look across at first the blasted remains of the Callahan Bridge and behind it the spires and skyscrapers of Staunton Island. Liberty

City feels big and a lot more organic than the endless grid of streets seen in the earlier GTA games. There are parkways, highways, back alleys, parking precincts, slums, swanky rich districts and even an enormous sports arena, just perfect for doughies.

And yet, the more GTA3 you play, the more limited the game begins to seem. At first glance, Liberty City seems to be a living, reacting environment, but scratch the surface and you'll soon realise that unless the player interacts with some part of the streetscape, everything in the city is on a slightly randomised loop, including the weather.

While it's great to see ambulances respond to the death and mayhem the player has spread and to see truck drivers smash their way through smaller vehicles in panic when the shooting starts, it would be better to see a city where things are happening without player interference. It's like the old philosophical conundrum: if a tree falls in the forest, does it make any sound? Except in GTA3's case, if the player doesn't plow through six pedestrians, write off a taxi and two

cop cars and set fire to a laundrette, does anything in Liberty City ever actually happen?

There's also an unfortunate sense of there being no real people in the city except the player and whichever boss he happens to be working for at the time. Watching the aforementioned commerce of the streets, there is little evidence of the seething mass of subterfuge and criminal intent which must logically be present in the city to generate all this work.

It is fortunate then, that Rockstar appears to have realised that the more freeform you make a game, the more limited it will seem to those players who truly want a freeform experience. To this end, the developer has made the decision to limit GTA3's realism and constantly remind the player that they are, after all, playing a game and not a simulation. There are numerous bonus tokens scattered around the city which restore health, magically remove police attention or 'heat' and generate armour - there is even a super-jump pill. There are also hidden packages to be found, which result in



Eee-aw! Eee-aw! Eee-aw!



It's off to the cannery for you, buddy



Hot in the city, hot in the city tonight



I've fallen and I can't get up

RADIO GAGA

While GTA3's gameplay is essentially pedestrian, its soundtrack excels. Whenever the player is inside a car, it's possible to select from one of six radio stations, each offering a different style of cheesy music. The real genius of these radio stations is that they are perfect comedic caricatures of the radio we listen to each day on the way to work. "Flashback FM, for people who just can't let go" and "You're on Head FM, where we give you ten minutes of music guaranteed... just as soon as you listen to nine minutes of messages from our sponsors" and "The station where we bring you more, because we pay our boys less." And who can forget the charming female DJ on Lips 106, who unwittingly promotes endless XXX Strip Club revues, thinking they're high-class Broadway musicals. Leave it to Beaver indeed.

bonus weapons and cash and a general 'collect it, find it, win the bonuses' feel to gameplay. And rather than taking away from the simulation experience, these

elements serve to take the sting off the essentially limited and repetitive nature of the game by reminding the player of when games were repetitive and that this can be a good thing.

GTA3's great success is in its freeform construction. There is no need to do anything that the game tells you. The rules of the game-world are constructed in such a way that simply driving around and smashing into things can be diverting - and for a distressingly long time. In this reviewer's play sessions, considerable hours were spent just listening to the in-game radio, finding more outlandish vehicles to steal and attempting to get the highest level of police attention which results in two helicopters, the FBI, a SWAT team and eventually even the National Guard.

Questions of morality aside (see boxout) GTA3 does contain that elusive and difficult ingredient that makes a game fun. A unique combination of tasks and 'sandbox' mode all rolled into the one engine ensure that there is always

something new to try, and the vast amount of hidden bonuses, tricks and special items in the game ensure there is always that sense of discovery and reward.

Anthony Fordham

RATING

FOR

- Freeform gaming
- Bonuses and specials
- Variety of tasks

AGAINST

- Essentially repetitive
- Limited NPC behaviour
- Save system

OVERALL

Definitely fun, slightly naughty, all the good things about gaming rolled into one

89

Soldier of Fortune 2

Shoot him in the brain!

DETAILS

| | |
|--------------------|----------------|
| DEVELOPER | Raven Software |
| PUBLISHER | Activision |
| DISTRIBUTOR | Activision |
| PRICE | \$89.95 |
| RATING | MA15 |
| AVAILABLE | Now |



Interior decorating

Tsk, tsk. Napping on the job

Well... do ya, punk?

Goin' postal in the workplace

SYSTEM

NEED

Pentium 3 450
64MB RAM
GeForce2 MX
500MB HDD

WANT

Athlon XP 1500+
128MB RAM
GeForce3
750MB HDD

What do you do when you put your heart and soul into making a FPS game the best it can be and all people do is go on about how graphically violent it is? Contemplate a highly public suicide? Chuck it all in to sell crappy trinkets at a market? Join PCPP as a jaded freelancer? Get real. You go back and make a sequel, featuring even more graphic and realistic violence.

It'd be highly presumptuous to dismiss SOF2 as another lame sequel based on an updated 3D engine and featuring different missions. Yes, the ultra-realistic violence is back, but SOF2 features upgrades and new features in all areas to make it one of the best all-round FPS titles on the market.

SOF2 sees you reprise the role of John Mullins, ex-Army Special Forces, Vietnam vet and now "consultant" to a covert organisation known only as The Shop. Holding no governmental allegiance and dedicated only to fighting terrorism, The Shop hires its services out when required. Mullins is aided by Sam Gladstone, also a Vietnam vet and ex-CIA operative who provides recon and hardware between missions, and also by

his new partner, Madeline Taylor, a medical technician who communicates with Mullins during each mission.

The first assignment is a flashback to ten years ago, setting the scene for the sequel. In SOF, Mullins helped smuggle Russian scientist Dr Piotr Ivanovich to the USA. Dr Ivanovich has since been working with The Shop and discovers that a former protégé has been developing a deadly mutagen virus known as Genesis. As the game unfolds, Mullins learns more about the virus' origins and must bring down Prometheus, a mysterious terrorist network planning to unleash Genesis and cause global chaos.

SOF2 boldly claims to be the most realistic FPS on the market, matched only perhaps by Medal of Honour. Environments are visually pleasing, with detailed exteriors generally superior to the rather lacklustre interiors. More time seems to have been spent on character modelling and texturing and, provided you have the hardware to exploit SOF2's full potential, there is some excellent graphical work on display.

Running on a heavily modified Quake III engine, SOF2 also shows off Raven's

own GHOUL2 rendering technology which gives characters an advanced skeletal joints system and facilitates per-pixel damage location. This means enemies are modelled with 36 different points at which bullets may leave gaping cavities in place of flesh and bone.

Hopefully, the visuals won't overshadow the terrific sound in SOF2. The slick voice acting adds individual personalities to the main characters while background music is perfectly matched with each mission type.

Violence for the sake of violence?

Considering that the original was notorious for being one of the most violent FPS games to date, Raven hasn't exactly held back in the sequel. Quite the contrary - there's plenty of red stuff flowing for the more bloodthirsty gamers. Mullins delivers a decapitation and limb-removal service free of charge. For those who don't appreciate the realistic violence of SOF2 (even though it's safe to assume gamers aren't timid when it comes to wanton violence), levels can be adjusted to your liking. But regardless of how juicy you like your FPS games, it's worth checking out the game in all its



Roger, Big Daddy. The shipment of red stuff is on its way



Goodbye, cruel world



Look, he's unarmed



Clowns to the left of me, jokers to the right

GOT SOME MATES?



Being such a strong single player game, SOF2 originally did not include a multiplayer mode. Thankfully, Raven have provided ten quality maps with plenty more available via a random map generator (limited to exterior environments) although the standard of these tends to be variable. While there are the usual team-based CTF and deathmatch modes, SOF2 regrettably does not include any bots. Still, the combat remains near flawless and there is much fun to be had with multiplayer.

A complete package

SOF2's multiple-objective missions are well thought out and provide plenty of depth to maintain keen interest and add singleplayer replay value. Whilst mission types can generally be divided between the usual search and destroy, assassination, hostage rescue and escort, and reconnaissance, there is enough variety to ensure that things don't descend into one-dimensionality. For instance, you'll get the opportunity to join a team of marines.

Although the use of a sound meter suggests that stealth is the name of the game, SOF2's flexible mission approach means that you can choose how to complete the missions: a guns-blazing, give-em-hell onslaught, a clandestine knife-in-the-back-type run, or a combination of both. Missions are set in an assortment of locales from the cobbled streets of Prague, to the jungles of Columbia and even Hong Kong.

SOF2 also gets the heart pounding with a clever little feature. To bypass locked doors and set explosives etc, an all-in-one toolkit can be activated by holding down the action key.

gory (or was that glory) at least once.

Death and injury animations allow you to watch enemies writhe on the ground, pass out after you've shot off a hand or leg, or clutch at their throats after a knife slash or a bullet in the trachea.

Tools of the trade

SOF2 offers an extensive weaponry and, unlike the original, greater emphasis has been placed on realism. All were personally chosen by the real John Mullins, which presumably adds to the authenticity. In its lone concession to militaristic fantasy SOF2 does allow you double your fun by using dual weapons.

There are over 14 different weapons, most with alternate fire modes and each with their strengths and weaknesses. This means that you won't be using one or two weapons 95 percent of the time. In singleplayer mode, even on the lowest difficulty setting, enemies are extremely mobile and will rarely stay still when you return fire. They'll interact directly with objects - e.g. overturning tables - and with the LICH AI System, enemies work in tandem, providing cover for each other, using smoke grenades etc.

SOF2 manages to thrill and challenge players in equal measure. Backed by exceptional graphics, solid AI, a competent storyline and unrestricted play, SOF2 delivers in every department. And you can still wade through as much bloody realism as you like.

RATING

FOR

- High degree of realism
- Intelligent, challenging AI
- Flexible gameplay requiring thought

AGAINST

- Long load times
- Heavy specs required
- Average sound effects

OVERALL

Has more to offer than just the high-level, realistic violence for which it is best known

91

Spider-Man: The Movie

My underpant senses are tingling...

DETAILS

DEVELOPER
Treyarch
PUBLISHER
Activision
DISTRIBUTOR
Activision
PRICE
\$89.95
RATING
PG
AVAILABLE
Now



Arachnophobia



Eight legs good, two legs bad



The hover board - a legacy of Back To The Future II



Check out my Astro Boy pose

SYSTEM

NEED
PIII 500
32MB Video Card
128MB RAM
700MB HDD

WANT
PIII 800
64MB Video Card
256MB RAM
1.3GB HDD

With the phenomenal success of Spider-Man at the cinemas it's naturally a no-brainer to release a game at the same time. Luckily for Activision, Spider-Man: The Movie (the game) faithfully brings the wall crawler to life right there on the CRT. Players can swing, crawl, jump and fight their way across a huge city in search of the Green Goblin. Although the game roughly follows the story presented in the film - all of the key action sequences are included - Spider-Man: The Movie (the game) also branches onto its own path and introduces us to a whole rogues' gallery of Spidey foes. Along the way you'll meet such seminal favourites as Shocker, The Scorpion, The Vulture and of course, The Green Goblin. To cope with all of the enemies at hand, ranging from mundane thugs to super powered villains, Spider-Man has a veritable arsenal up his bright red sleeve. Through the game, the webbed wonder can learn new hand-to-hand combos, special web powers and unlock new and improved costumes, making for a fun and immersive third-person action game.

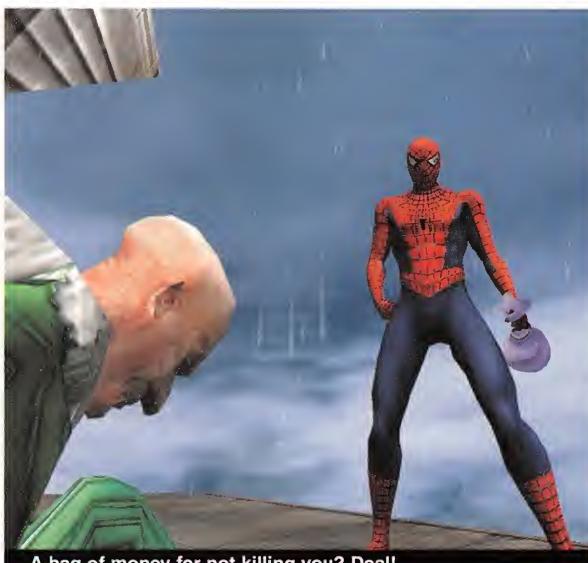
By using the format of short action vignettes, Spider-Man keeps the action

good and varied, never letting the player get bored by repetition. Different levels could have you fighting your way through a gang of thugs to apprehend Uncle Ben's killer, swinging through the city fighting off flying killer robots, climbing up a collapsing clock tower or saving civilians from falling debris. Web swinging is by far the most exhilarating thing in Spider-Man and the game engine handles it very well. Unlike the previous Spider-Man games, our favourite arachnid hero can now turn on a dime, change elevation and engage in airborne combat. Though Spider-Man will accept keyboard input, the complexity of the control system really needs a game pad to play properly. With different buttons for webbing, swing, jump, punch, kick, web combo, web zip, target, camera lock, crouch and different controls for character and camera movement, Spider-Man takes a fair amount of practice to master, but a bit of persistence should see you swinging like a pro.

Godzilla vs Camera

Once again the problem that has plagued previous Spider-Man games

comes into play in the latest incarnation of the series. The camera is awful. Whether the camera is actively controlled or set to passively follow the character around, the POV moves with such random sluggishness that half of the time it's impossible to see what is actually going on. Some times if you move close to a wall to hide in the shadows, the camera will pan around behind the wall itself, occluding everything but the nicely textured wood or brick from view. At others Spidey will get beaten senseless by a fast moving thug because the camera moves too slowly to catch up with the action leaving the player frantically mashing the attack buttons in the vain hope that the bad guy will get in the way of flailing fists and feet. To make matters worse, the slowly moving and seemingly wild camera causes the orientation of controls to change depending on the view - you can be running forward at one point and have the camera move because of a wall or some other obstacle and suddenly find yourself running the other way because the controls are reversed. This is frustrating to say the least. A camera lock feature that allows the player to lock the POV on



A bag of money for not killing you? Deal!



Listen, I own the copyright on the suit concept! You'll be hearing from my lawyers



Spidey's seen worse than a scorpion sting



Is that... an American Airlines 767? (Tasteful - Ed)

My Bonus Senses Are Tingling!

If the sheer fun of swinging your way through massive cityscapes isn't enough for you, Spider-Man delivers the goods when it comes to special unlockable features. By including a style points section in the scoring, Treyarch has added a great deal to the replayability of the game. Anyone can finish a level, but not everyone can do it with style. Accumulated style points can be used to buy new costumes, skills, movie stills or unlock new characters such as the Green Goblin or Mary Jane Watson to play. Other secret bonuses include unlimited webbing, big head mode and a first person mode for those people who really like to be disoriented.

a target alleviates some of these problems but you still need to be able to see the enemy to target them.

Some people may want to write off the newest Spider-Man as a simple port of a console game but thankfully a great deal of effort has gone into improved graphics and sound. To put it simply, Spider-Man looks absolutely beautiful. All of the animations are

wonderfully fluid and bring the web-head to life perfectly and resolution can be pumped up as high as your video card and monitor can handle. We played the game at 1280x1024 and were truly blown away at the level of detail available. More impressive still are the sweeping cityscapes above which a good deal of the action takes place. Not only does the city contain enough different buildings to give a real sense of scale and variety, a number of incidental animations taking place on the street below really make the place feel truly alive. At different points in the game you will see police barricading off streets, yellow cabs zipping in and out of traffic with suicidal glee or civilians getting into arguments. None of these events affect how Spider-Man plays in any way whatsoever. Instead, they truly add to the scope of the experience.

Real Act0rz!

Sound is equally impressive with members of the film cast voicing their respective characters. Tobey Maguire delivers an excellent performance as the titular hero and Willem Dafoe chews

up the (pre-rendered) scenery as Norman Osborne, aka the Green Goblin. As far as the voice acting is concerned special mention must be given to Bruce Campbell of Evil Dead fame. As the narrator, Campbell gives hints and tips on the action, navigating certain obstacles or simple observations. The narration is very helpful in completing the game and introducing the staggering number of special moves or spider abilities that can be used. Once all of the useful information has been relayed, Campbell just gets weird and at one point goes silent for a while because he's left "to get a ham sandwich". We're not sure what that has to do with the game but it certainly made us laugh. The incidental music reflects the action well and highlights the tension admirably.

Though the camera problems greatly affect the playability of Spider-Man they fall just short of being a game killer, making Spider-Man: The Movie the best Spider-Man game released to date. The combination of thrilling web-swinging action and complex beat-em-up action makes for a great diversion between screenings of the film.

Daniel Wilks

RATING

FOR

- Amazing graphics
- Web-slinging
- Secrets and bonuses

AGAINST

- Crap camera
- Too short
- Kinda 'young'

OVERALL

The best straight action superhero game on the PC, it renews our faith in movie adaptations

86

Cultures 2

The little guys are coming to get me!

DETAILS

DEVELOPER
Funatics
PUBLISHER
JoWood
DISTRIBUTOR
Red Ant
PRICE
Unknown
RATING
G
AVAILABLE
Now



Houseboat culture



Great Thor! They're spreading like bacteria

SYSTEM

NEED
PII 450
128MB RAM
16MB Video Card
700MB HD

WANT
PIII 1GHz
256MB RAM
16MB Video Card
700MB HDD



So where are all the Swedish babes?



The beginnings of Copenhagen

RATING

FOR
■ Visually attractive
■ Easy to learn
■ More combat

AGAINST
■ Nothing really new
■ Dull
■ Annoying interface

OVERALL

Pleasant enough, but doesn't offer much for the experienced RTS gamer

70

For many years during the first millennia after the death of the Christian saviour, the Vikings engaged in a reign of terror. They settled in the UK, France, Germany, North America, they founded modern Russia by uniting its many tribes, took over the low countries, the Baltic states and even made it South as far as the Crimea and as far East as the Urals. In fact nearly all European cultures have a bit of Viking in them somewhere, so successful were they in their efforts. As the most successful colonisers in history (Oi, what about the British then? - Ed), it's only natural that a game like Cultures be focused on the Vikings and their way of life.

The original Cultures was essentially a reworking of Blue Byte's (also a German company) Settlers series and even though it received quite favourable coverage, didn't really set the sales charts on fire here in Oz. Success in its home country has lead to a sequel and a much more combat-oriented game.

Settle this!

Unlike the Settlers titles, Cultures allows you direct control over your

villagers through a complex right-click menu system which unfortunately hasn't been improved in any way in the sequel. Giving orders during hectic moments can be very frustrating, particularly if you like to run the game in high resolution as it makes your little guys and gals very hard to isolate and click on.

As you might imagine, this is kind of counter-productive to a game with an expanded military capability. You have access to many more military options in the form of new units, buildings and equipment. For example arms and armour are now individually upgradeable. As you can imagine however this also adds a porta-loo load of micromanagement to the gameplay which can be a drag.

Buildings can now be extended with new improvements to give them new abilities or to make them more efficient. The resources available to you are still the same: Wood, Stone, Mushrooms and Clay, and as you develop technology, Mining allows access to Gold and other minerals. Your resource gathering will become quite monumental in some missions as the

materials you need for building a large army are many.

Drink Yakult!

Cultures 2 comes with eight skirmish maps and 16 'multiplayer training' maps to get you in shape for any online or LAN challenge. The German version of Cultures 2 already has a patch out to aid with the online aspects and by the time you read this, a version of the patch for the English version should be available.

So why Cultures 2? If you're happy with Settlers IV or Age 2 or whatever, why buy Cultures 2? Have the developers provided enough innovation and freshness to make everyone jump on the bandwagon or is it just another RTS? Unfortunately the answer has more of the latter than the former. With game designers being forced to play it safer and safer as profits decline, there's little chance that they'll make a game that captures imaginations the world over. Less risk and less innovation equals more of the same old bollocks. Ultimately Cultures 2 is just plain dull as it walks on very well trodden ground.

George Soropos

Hotel Giant

Room service! ROOM SERVICE!



DETAILS

DEVELOPER Enlight Software
PUBLISHER JoWood Prod
DISTRIBUTOR JoWood Prod
PRICE \$69.95
RATING PG
AVAILABLE Now



VARIETY RULES

Hotels can be built in over 20 different cities across the globe and each can be tailored specifically to the locale. For instance, beachside resorts are the way to go in Honolulu while old-world charm rules in Chicago. You can also manage an assortment of different establishments, from B&Bs with only a few rooms to multi-story monoliths with every feature and luxury imaginable, all of which provides for plenty of variety.

SYSTEM

NEED Celeron 366
 64MB RAM
 16MB Video Card
 350MB HDD
WANT Duron 650
 64MB RAM
 32MB Video Card
 400MB HDD

RATING

FOR

- Easy to navigate menus
- Variety of hotels and venues
- Control over every aspect of hotel

AGAINST

- Low fun factor
- Some camera issues
- Uninspiring graphics

OVERALL

A true to life sim game stocked with features and detail, but a bit lacking in personality

72

Derek Lee

OK, who hasn't stayed in a hotel and had a few little souvenirs from the room somehow find their way into your luggage? Or abused the wonderful feature that is room service? Yes indeed, running a hotel is no picnic when it comes to having to cater for the average Neanderthal guest.

Having been through city, rollercoaster, railroad, theme park and golf course sims, it was only a matter of time before hotels got their turn. Regardless of the name, the principles of a sim game remain the same: monitor customer moods and keep them happy any way you can, all the while keeping an eye on the accounts. In a strange approach, Hotel Giant allows players to use cheats to force guests to perform certain actions or tasks, in order to help boost satisfaction levels.

Sims Vacation 2?

The game is divided into multiple objectives, such as achieving guest quotas or satisfaction levels or reaching specific profit targets. These objectives are split into missions, in either a progressive campaign mode or a random map. In either mode

there is a mix between taking over the management of an existing establishment, or designing your own from the ground up. Adding new rooms and renovating hotel floors is accomplished via an easy to use construction function. Once walls have been built, there are plenty of furnishings and miscellaneous items with which to fit out each room, although not the near unlimited variety as you might find in The Sims.

Your hotel can be viewed from one of three angles: isometric, first-person or top-down view. A camera can also follow guests and staff as they move about the hotel on their everyday business. This is a nice little feature let down by poor camera work, as followed targets will frequently disappear behind walls and other objects.

Bland Towers

As a gimmick feature, which every game needs (and keeping in line with the theme of hotels and vacations), Hotel Giant allows you to take happy snaps of your establishment. These snapshots can then be captioned and viewed in a slide show or uploaded

onto a website if you want to show off your handiwork.

Graphics are acceptable and although entirely adequate for the purposes of the game, it would have been nice to have seen a little bit more detail and work put into the textures and models. Background music is noticeable without being distracting and there is the usual assortment of sounds from guests and staff.

Hotel Giant successfully captures the feel of what it must be like to run a hotel, but does it in a very workmanlike way. The fun factor seems to have been overlooked. As usual, every imaginable aspect of hotel management has been incorporated into the game, from supervising food quality in restaurants, managing payrolls, to designing interior decor and staff uniforms. Information is easily accessible via a number of sub-menus and always clearly displayed. Micro-managing every facet of the day-to-day operation of your hotel is a dull process and unfortunately, Hotel Giant is not imbued with the quirkiness or personality that makes other sim games so engaging.

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| 10MB website space | 10MB website space |
| 56K dial-up as backup | None |

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IN REVIEW

Stuff you need to make your box the Beast

HARDWARE

Like all advanced technology in the world today, that which separates the hardcore from the simple user is the ability to refine our equipment. Indeed within all art-forms, there's a certain level of skill required to get the most out of your machine, be it car or computer, and in the PC world we call it tweaking. More than just simply overclocking, tweaking is the process of fine tuning the many functions of your PC to squeeze every last ounce of performance out of it.

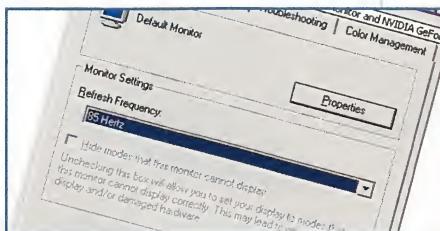
As gamers we desire, nay, require our systems to function in tip-top condition where every increase in frame rate counts towards our goal of gaming domination. To aid you in this most noble of causes we put Asher Moses to the task with four pages of fiddly fanaticism on one of the most important devices in our PCs. The accelerator.

Stuart Calvin returns once again to educate, inform and guide those lost in the technical wilderness with answers to the questions that you, our readers challenge him with. No matter how difficult, our man is up to the task and we invite you to keep those questions coming in - he loves it.

Daniel Wilks our PCPP jack-of-all-trades evaluates the Techbuy PC and continues our thorough examination of monitors. We also take a look at a new hard-disk and indulge in the sweet pleasure of 5.1 surround sound with the Muse 5.1 kit. The NVIDIA Ti4400 gets a looking over and I get all excited about the 533MHz front side bus of the new Intel i845G motherboard with its support for the new 2.4GHz Pentium 4.

Finally our friend The Beast ambles back in and taunts us with the latest technology we wish we could afford and all desire. Mmmmm, technology.

Jere Lawrence
Deputy Editor
jerel@next.com.au



THE PCPP TECHNICAL AWARDS SYSTEM



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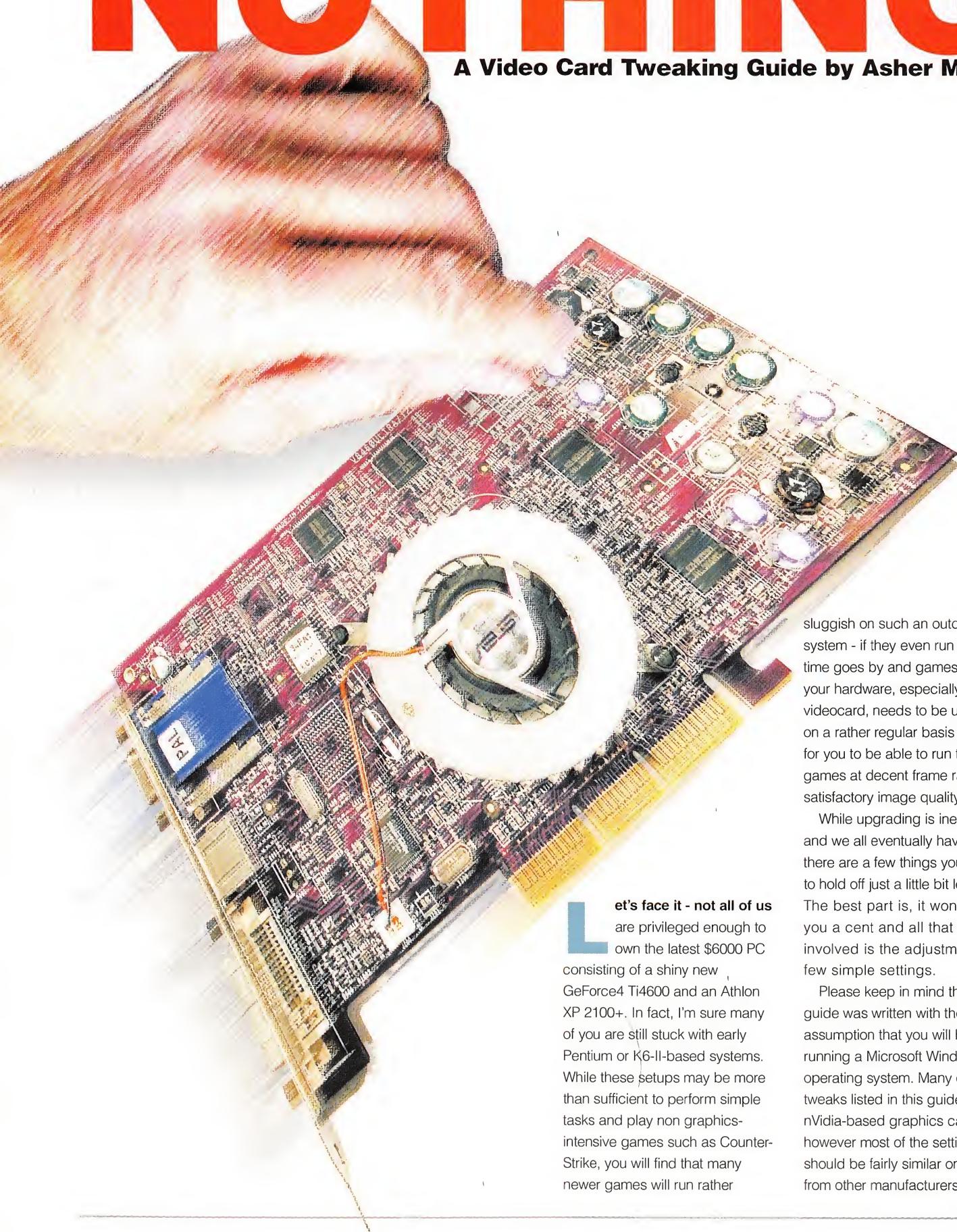
Mediocre with little to recommend it.

A dog. Avoid.

The local point of contact for the product.
The RRP at the time of going to print.
Where to find further relevant information.

SOMETHING FOR NOTHING

A Video Card Tweaking Guide by Asher Moses



Let's face it - not all of us are privileged enough to own the latest \$6000 PC consisting of a shiny new GeForce4 Ti4600 and an Athlon XP 2100+. In fact, I'm sure many of you are still stuck with early Pentium or K6-II-based systems. While these setups may be more than sufficient to perform simple tasks and play non graphics-intensive games such as Counter-Strike, you will find that many newer games will run rather

sluggish on such an outdated system - if they even run at all. As time goes by and games advance, your hardware, especially the videocard, needs to be upgraded on a rather regular basis in order for you to be able to run the latest games at decent frame rates with satisfactory image quality.

While upgrading is inevitable and we all eventually have to do it, there are a few things you can do to hold off just a little bit longer. The best part is, it won't cost you a cent and all that is involved is the adjustment of a few simple settings.

Please keep in mind that this guide was written with the assumption that you will be running a Microsoft Windows operating system. Many of the tweaks listed in this guide are for nVidia-based graphics cards, however most of the settings should be fairly similar on devices from other manufacturers.

How high is too high?

This is one of the most common overclocking-related questions that is asked - How high can I safely overclock my video card? How do I know when I've gone too far? Well, just make sure you overclock in small increments. Don't try to go 100MHz above stock speed straight off. Take things one step at a time. Slowly bump up the speed by 5MHz increments until you start noticing instability or screen artefacts. Once this happens, clock it back down to your last stable speed and run through a benchmark demo to make sure it is

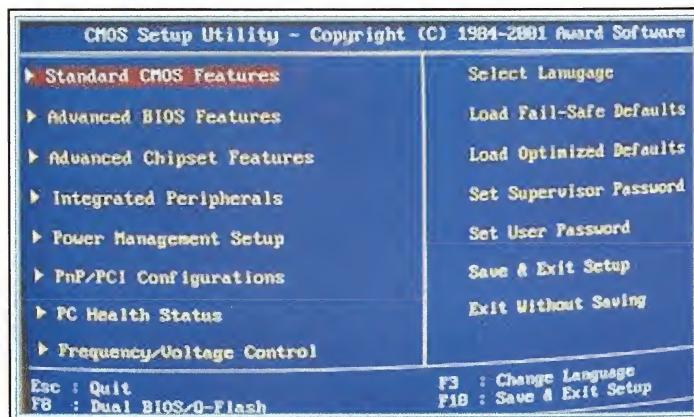
completely stable. A great tool that is often used to test both video card performance and stability is MadOnion's 3DMark2001 SE (<http://www.madonion.com>). 3DMark2001 SE is a downloadable DirectX 8 benchmark that runs your system through a variety of highly graphics-intensive tests and finally outputs an overall score. If you can run through a whole 3DMark demo without your computer freezing or rebooting, then it is safe to say that your system is stable.

The BIOS

The first thing you will

want to do is enter the BIOS. Here you can adjust various AGP (Advanced Graphics Port) settings to make sure your video card is running at full speed with optimal settings. When you turn on your computer, before loading your operating system you will be

BIOS menu. This is the amount of main memory that is allocated to the AGP device. Using this function, the AGP card can process data from the main memory itself, instead of onboard memory. It is important to select the AGP aperture size wisely because too much will cause lack of memory for other



taken to a screen that runs routine memory tests and detects installed IDE devices. In the bottom left-hand corner of this screen you should see something like, "Press <KEY> to enter setup." Setup is usually used as another name for the BIOS menu and in most cases <KEY> is either Del, F1, F2 or Esc, depending on the type of BIOS your system uses.

Once inside the BIOS, there are a few settings that are relevant to tweaking your video card. They are as follows:

AGP Aperture Size - This setting is usually located in the Advanced Chipset Features

operations and too little will give low graphic performance. The AGP aperture size should be set to half or a quarter of your system memory. So, if you have a 256MB system memory, you should set your AGP aperture size to either 128MB or 64MB.

AGP Mode - This option controls the transmission rate of the AGP bus. There is usually a selection of either 1x (264MB/sec), 2x (528MB/sec) or 4x (1056MB/sec). If your video card supports AGP 4x (all recent video cards do), then make sure that you have the AGP mode set to AGP 4x, as you will not get anywhere near maximum

performance from your video card if it is set to AGP 2x or 1x.

AGP Fast Writes - By enabling this option, video card memory is written to directly, rather than forcing data to go through the system bus. This results in higher performance because data will be transferred to the video card much quicker. If your BIOS allows you to adjust this option, make sure it is set to Enabled.

AGP Sideband Addressing - This provides additional channels for transmitting data requests between the graphics processor and the system. Enable this for a slight performance increase.

AGP Voltage - As the name suggests, this option allows you to adjust the voltage that is being supplied to your AGP card. Raising the voltage will allow you to reach higher clock speeds whilst overclocking, however it will also increase your video card's heat output.

The Drivers

Before performing the tweaks listed below, it is important that you have the most up-to-date drivers installed for your video card. These can be found on your video card manufacturer's website or on the website of the company that manufacturers your graphics chipset (e.g. nVidia, ATI, STMicro, etc). Updating drivers is one of the easiest ways to squeeze extra performance out of your video card and it is not

unusual to get a 10-20% performance increase.

Chipset drivers also have a very large influence on your AGP card's performance. Depending on the motherboard chipset, you should make sure that you have the correct and most up-to-date drivers installed for your system. For example, if you have a motherboard based on a VIA chipset, it is important to ensure that you have the latest VIA 4in1 drivers installed. These can be downloaded from the internet, usually on your motherboard manufacturer's website.

Now that you have the latest drivers installed, let's get down to business. The first thing you will need to do is open your Additional Display Properties menu. Start by right-clicking on your desktop and select Properties. Then go over to the Settings tab and click the Advanced button towards the bottom of the screen. Now click the tab that corresponds with the name of your graphics chipset (e.g. If your graphics card is based on the GeForce2 GTS chipset, the tab will be called GeForce2 GTS). Next click on the Additional Properties button located towards the bottom of the menu.

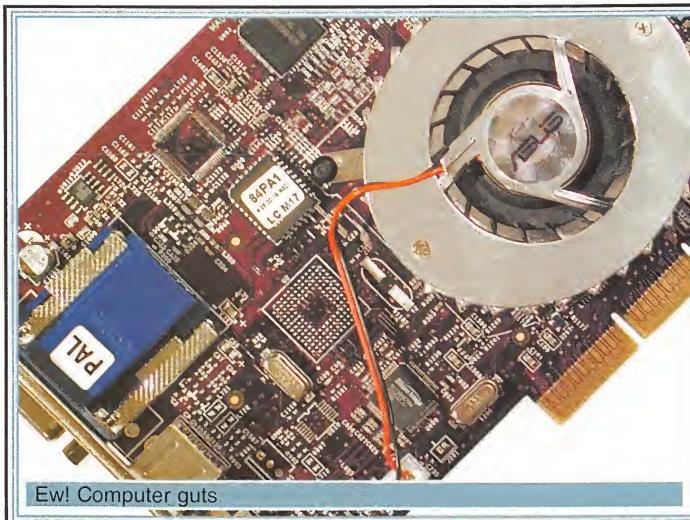
Once you are inside the Additional Properties menu, you will notice various tabs labelled Direct3D Settings, OpenGL Settings, 3D Anti-aliasing

Beating the heat

While the stock heatsink/fan unit and memory heatsinks which often come bundled with your graphics card may be a sufficient solution if you are running your card at stock speeds, the tweaks performed in this guide, especially overclocking, increase your card's heat production because you are running the core and memory past factory default settings.

To get the highest speed possible out of your card, you will definitely want to replace the stock cooling solution with something slightly more efficient. A popular company that produces

various cooling products that many of you may have heard of by now is ThermalTake (<http://www.thermaltake.com>). ThermalTake produces a wide variety of heatsink/fan units and memory heatsinks that can be used to cool your video card. For optimal performance, we recommend the Crystal Orb chipset cooler and memory heatsink package. Sure, there are plenty of other chipset cooling solutions on the market, but the ThermalTake range has been regarded by many as the highest performing available.



Settings and so on. Each of these tabs feature a variety of settings that can be adjusted for maximum performance or image quality, depending on what you require the most. For example, if you own a GeForce4 Ti4600 graphics card on an AMD AthlonXP 2100+ system, you will want better image quality over higher frame rates because your system would already be more than capable of running any current game, at any resolution, without breaking a sweat.

OpenGL Settings

The OpenGL menu has quite a few relevant settings that shouldn't be overlooked. These include "Use fast linear-mipmap-linear filtering", "Buffer-flipping

quality. Enabled or disable this depending on your preference.

Buffer-flipping mode - This is relevant to full-screen OpenGL applications. For optimal performance, set this to "page flipping" mode. If you experience any tearing or noticeable image distortion during gameplay, change it back to Auto-Select mode.

Vertical Sync - VSync forces the graphics card to render frames at the same speed as the monitor. When enabled, this usually results in lower frame rates and unless you experience any tearing issues, leave this set to Always Off.

Anisotropic Filtering - This is a type of texture filtering separate and complimentary to

bilinear/trilinear filtering. Put simply, anisotropic filtering makes textures that are further away from you appear less blurry. While this results in a crisper, smoother image, it also gives a slight performance hit. Again, enable or disable this option depending on your preference.

Direct3D Settings

There is really only one option in this driver menu that will have an impact on performance. This option is "Mipmap detail level". Put simply, "Mipmap detail level" controls how well textures fit objects as they move further away. If you want a higher frame rate, set this

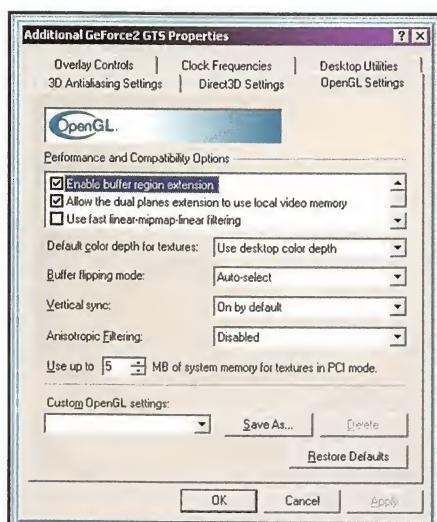
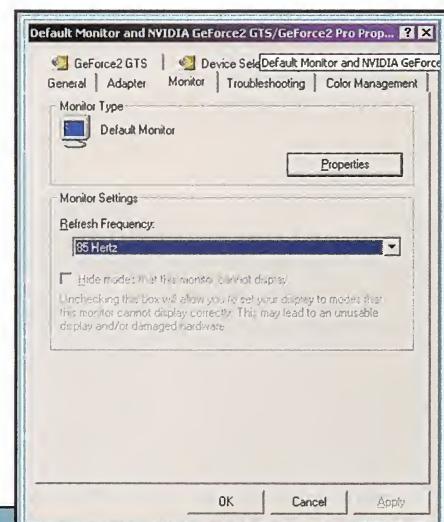
mode", "Vertical sync" and "Anisotropic Filtering".

Use fast linear-mipmap-linear filtering - This setting gives a slight increase in performance when enabled, however the trade-off is reduced image



may result in permanent damage. There is a wide variety of software that enables you to easily overclock your video card within Windows itself. My personal favourite happens to be a little program called PowerStrip, created by a Taiwanese company called Entech (<http://www.entechtaian.com/ps.htm>). You can download this program free of charge within minutes as the install file is only 821KB.

PowerStrip sits in your system tray and works with almost all graphics cards on the market, ranging from the venerable Matrox Millennium I to the latest Radeon 8500DV and GeForce4

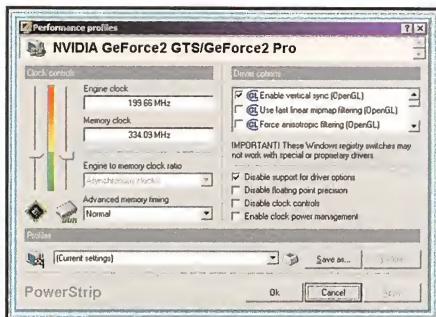


Refresh Rate

Refresh rate is the rate at which a monitor redraws the image onto the screen. It is measured in Hertz (Hz). This means, if you have a refresh rate of 85Hz, your monitor draws the image 85 times per second. This relates to your videocard because the frame rate (fps) is the rate at which your video card can output this image. If you have your refresh rate set too low, although your video card may be able to output the image quickly, your monitor won't be able to redraw the image fast enough for you to see the difference. Higher refresh rate also reduces eye-strain, so it is important that you have this option set correctly.

In order to adjust the refresh rate, right click on your desktop

and go down to Properties. Once the Display Properties menu pops up, click the Advanced button towards the bottom of the screen and go to the Monitor tab. You will then notice the Refresh Frequency setting where there is a pull-down menu to adjust your refresh rate. The maximum refresh rate you can choose depends on your monitor and video card, and it changes as depending on your resolution. Make sure that you know the maximum refresh rate your monitor can handle before adjusting this setting, as incorrectly doing so can result in permanent damage to your monitor. If you are running at 1280x960 resolution or lower, you should make sure your refresh rate is at least 75-85Hz.



Ti4600. There is a large assortment of adjustments you can make with this program, however I will just be concentrating on the clock controls section as we have already covered the rest of the settings earlier on. To get into the clock controls panel, right click on the PowerStrip icon in your system tray, scroll down to Performance Profiles and select Configure.

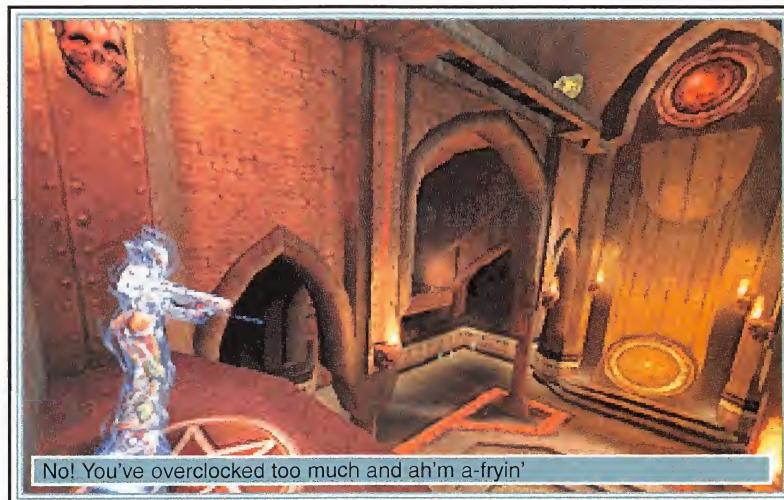
On the clock controls panel you will notice two sliders that allow you to adjust the core clock (aka Engine clock) and memory clock speed of your video card. Generally overclocking the memory gives a larger performance increase than overclocking the core because when you overclock the memory, you are increasing the fill rate, which has a significant impact on overall performance. The speed you will be able to obtain is highly dependant on the graphics chipset, quality of the memory chips and the cooling solutions used. Try increasing both the memory and core clock speed in 5MHz increments until you experience screen artefacts or lockups. Once this happens, set it back down to your last stable speed and test it with a graphics

intensive game, such as Quake 3 Arena or a benchmarking demo such as 3DMark2001 SE. If you do not experience any lockups or artefacts during gameplay, then your system is stable. If you do have problems, lower the speed by 1MHz at a time and

GeForce Tweak Utility

For those of you that own nVidia-based graphics cards, there is a much easier way to perform many of the tweaks listed in this guide. The GeForce Tweak Utility is a small, downloadable program that was created by a respected online publication called The Guru of 3D (<http://www.guru3d.com/geforceutility/>). This program allows you

to adjust a whole range of settings including AGP Transfer Rate, AGP FastWrites, AGP Sideband Addressing, clock speeds, driver settings and much more. This certainly makes things much easier for owners of nVidia graphics cards because it incorporates all the important tweaks into one easy-to-use application.



256MB PC2100 DDR SDRAM and an MSI GeForce4 Ti4400. Please note that in the "after" tests the video card has been overclocked to 303/680MHz core/memory clock speed over the default speed of 275/550MHz.

Benchmarks

Before

After

3D Mark 2001 SE
1024x768 32-bit

6689

7265

Quake 3 Arena
1024x768 32-bit

156.8

173.2

There you have it folks.

Just by performing the tweaks listed in this guide you can obtain almost a 20fps increase in Quake 3 Arena at 1024x768x32 and nearly a 600 3DMark increase in 3DMark2001 SE. This increase is certainly tangible in the real-world and considering that it doesn't cost you a cent (unless you purchase a third-party cooling solution), I'm sure the extra performance will be more than welcome by all of you.



re-test until you reach a stable point.

Testing The Theory

In order to give you an idea of just how much extra performance you can obtain by simply performing the tweaks listed above, 3DMark2001 SE and Quake 3 Arena benchmarks were run before and after the tweaks were performed. These tests were run on an Intel Pentium 4 2GHz based system running an Abit BD7-RAID motherboard (i845D), OCZ

Intel

i845G Motherboard

The world of hardware is a cutthroat one where innovation and technological improvement isn't just expected, but necessary for vendors to stay solvent. With AMD successfully taking a fair slice of the processor revenue pie and VIA and SIS manufacturing better P4 Soho solutions, Intel has had to strike back. The result is the i845G desktop motherboard and the P4 2.53, 2.40 and 2.26GHz processors.

Essentially a revamped i850E the good news is that with the i845G, Intel has abandoned its requirement for RDRAM and has finally added SDRAM and DDR-SDRAM support resulting in a more affordable P4 solution.

Front Side Bus

The i845G feature set is very rich and starts with a powerful Front Side Bus (FSB) speed of either 400 or 533MHz. The FSB speed is, however, tied to the processor you're using and Intel has updated its naming convention accordingly.

The "A" designation refers to 0.13um and 0.18um-478 cores with overlapping speeds.

The "B" designation refers to a 0.13um 533MHz FSB to

distinguish between overlapping speeds with a 400MHz FSB.

For example:

2.40GHz = 0.13um 2.40GHz with 533MHz FSB (4.5x data rate).

2.40GHz = 0.13um 2.40GHz with 400MHz FSB (6x data rate).

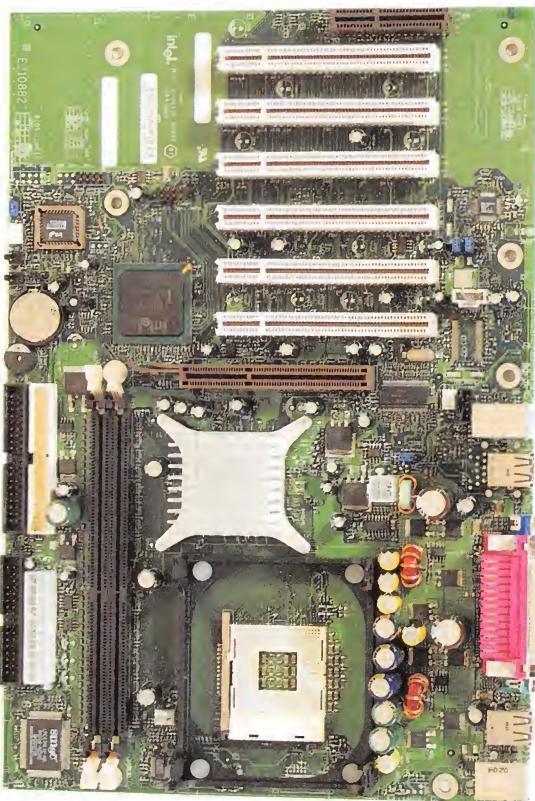
Not intending to belittle the wonders of 400/533MHz front side busses it is in reality the 100 and 133 MHz bus at 4 times the data rate.

Memory

Most important to the consumer is the memory model that the i845G allows. On the cheaper end there's support for up to 3GB of PC133 SDRAM which offers a maximum theoretical memory bandwidth of 1GB/s. Next offering is PC1600 DDR SDRAM of which the board can support only 2GB but with a max theoretical memory bandwidth of 1.6GB/s. Finally the board can address up to 2GB of PC2100 DDR SDRAM with its max theoretical memory bandwidth of 2.1GB/s.

Intel Hub Architecture

Also known as Accelerated Hub Architecture (AHA), this is an Intel 800-series chipset design that uses a dedicated bus to



What a mother!

transfer data between the two main processor chips instead of using the Peripheral Component Interconnect (PCI) bus. Providing a dedicated data path and twice the bandwidth of PCI at 266 MB per second, the AHA consists of a memory controller hub and an I/O controller hub that allows for simultaneous processing of the CPU interface, memory interface and AGP interface.

monitors. Although it's unlikely anyone would want to place an inferior AGP video card into the i845G it is worth noting that it supports 1.5v cards only, making AGP 2x and 1x cards unusable. Performance wise, the card is not at the level of NVIDIA's nForce mobo chipset but is faster than a GeForce 2 MX200 and certainly better than Intel's previous i815 3D chipset.

Integrated video

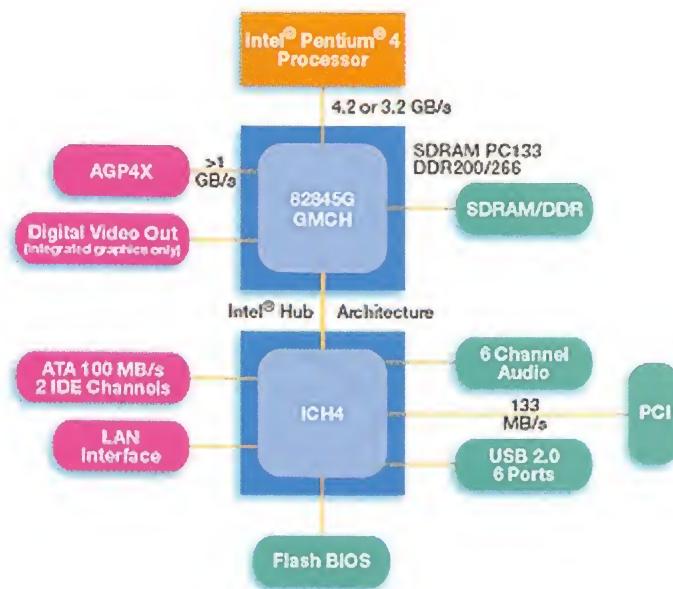
Featuring the graphics chipset which the board was named after, the integrated video of the i845G offers an acceptable mid to low range solution for 3D. Its functionality includes: Rapid Pixel and Texel Rendering, Dynamic Video Memory, Zone Rendering, Integrated Memory Management, a core Frequency of 200MHz, a 350MHz RAMDAC, Multi-texturing for light maps and atmospheric effects and Multiple Display functionality. The additional purchase of an AGP extension module adds TV out and a DVI port for TFT/LCD

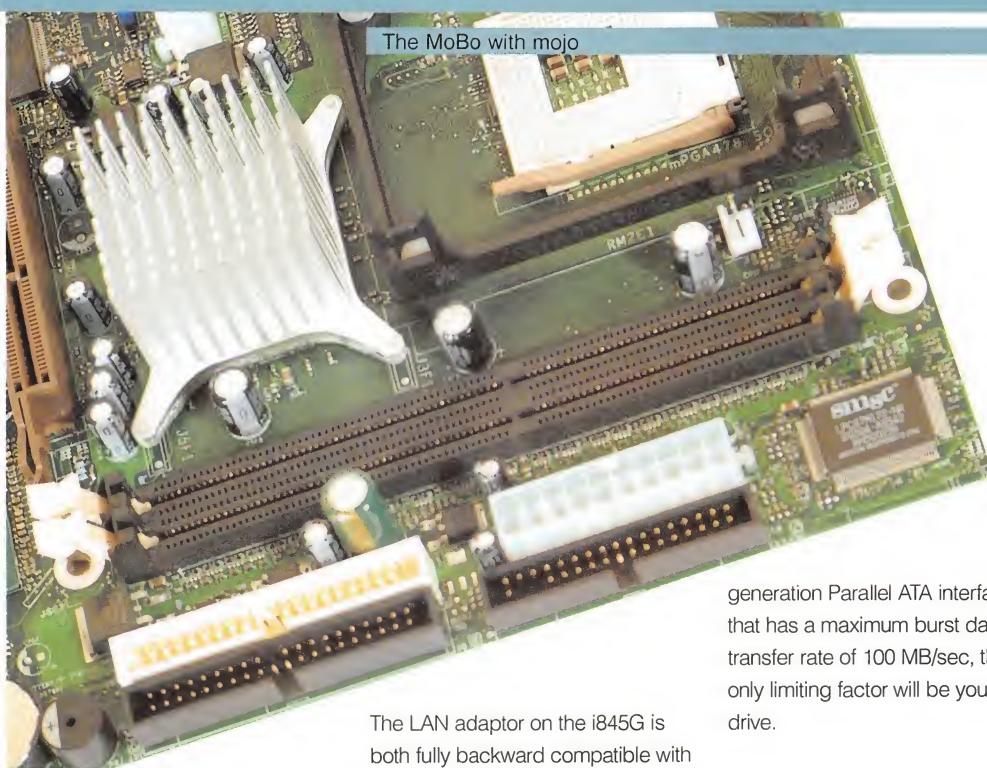
USB 2.0

With USB 1.1 being phased out in the hardware industry it's no surprise to find USB 2.0 integrated into the i845G. Intel's south bridge component I/O controller Hub (ICH) 82801DB chip can support up to 6 USB ports at 480 MB/s - 40 times faster than USB 1.1. Four ports are mounted on the back panel with a standard pin connector for 2 additional ports mounted in the case, normally at the front.

SoundMax

Further integration into the i845G includes the addition of the





SoundMax Cadenza sound chip. An AC'97 compatible device it features: Full 20-bit audio processing, is full duplex allowing for simultaneous recording and playback, a 96 dB signal-to-noise-ratio, 44.1kHz sampling rate and hardware noise reduction that detects and removes repetitive ambient noise for voice recognition.

Environmental effects such as Reverb, chorus and EAX are included utilising Sensaura's 3D positional and environmental enhancements which modify the phase and group delay of outgoing audio signals for three-dimensional sound. MIDI functionality is also included utilising wavetable synthesis that allows for the downloading of soundbanks for MIDI playback.

Gigabit Ethernet and Ultra ATA-100

100 times faster than 10-megabit and 10 times faster than 100-megabit, 1-gigabit Ethernet is a networking dream come true. Especially considering that this speed is fully achievable through standard cat-5 Ethernet cabling.

The LAN adaptor on the i845G is both fully backward compatible with 100Mb and 10Mb transfer rates with the only requirement needed to move to 1Gb being a new HUB.

The inclusion of the two standard Ultra ATA-100 interfaces completes the i845G. Featuring the latest-

generation Parallel ATA interface that has a maximum burst data transfer rate of 100 MB/sec, the only limiting factor will be your hard drive.

Conclusion

With its 6 PCI slots, AGP interface and CNR slot the i845G offers plenty of scope for peripheral devices. The inclusion of a single serial and parallel port adds

Serial ATA

Although not featured in the current 800 series boards, Intel is planning to move to the Serial ATA interface for its next generation of motherboards. Developed by an association of seven leading PC technology companies, the Serial Advanced Technology Attachment (ATA) storage interface for hard-disk drives (HDDs) will be replacing ATA Packet Interface (ATAPI) devices within the next 12 months.

Compared with Parallel ATA, Serial ATA will have lower signaling voltages and a dramatically reduced pin count. More importantly, it will be much faster and more robust with a much smaller cable and completely software compatible with Parallel ATA.

Parallel ATA has been around for a long time and despite

serving hard-disks well for many years has issues that need to be addressed in the next generation of PCs. A rather annoying problem associated with Parallel ATA is that the device requires a 5-volt signal and high count 40 pin cable connectors with an 18-inch length limitation. Talk to any tech and chances are that due to case size or internal media bay location they've been inconvenienced by this limitation - many times.

Other impediments caused by the large flat cable is that they're difficult to effectively position or mount in a case and their shape and bulk can restrict air flow, creating hot spots.

Serial ATA is designed to alleviate these problems with its low-voltage requirement (500 millivolts [mV] peak-to-peak) and replaces the wide Parallel ATA ribbon cable with a thin,

Price: \$230

Distributor: Compuparts

URL: www.intel.com

Phone: (02) 9482 2582

backward compatibility for older devices as well as standard PS/2 connectors for mouse and keyboard. A very, very tidy board it has the kind of tight professional design to it that could only come from a large multi-national. Overall, the i845G is quite desirable, and at only \$230, a bargain. Additionally, with the cost of 2GHz processors down to only \$440 the P4 solution has reached new affordability. Be sure to "tune in" next month as we compare the i845G with a competing 533MHz P4 board from Asus.

Jere Lawrence



Shhh... secrets inside

flexible cable that can be up to one metre in length.

Serial ATA will be completely software compatible with Parallel ATA and there is even a converter in the works to allow for the use of older hard-disks on the new interface. Whilst in transition to SATA, hard disk manufacturers will include both the 40 pin Parallel ATA interface as well as the much smaller SATA one on their drives. Due to the nature of Integrated Drive Electronics (IDE), there will be no change required for any operating systems to handle the new interface. Serial ATA will also support all other ATA and ATAPI devices, including CDs, DVDs, tape devices, high capacity removable devices, zip drives, and CDRWs.

Techbuy

Gamers Box

With the incredibly rapid advances in PC card technology as opposed to monitor technology, a number of retailers have been prompted to put together upgrade boxes working on the theory that it's more useful and cost effective to upgrade your entire PC and keep existing peripherals. The Techbuy Gamers Box is one of these upgrade machines and a particularly good one at that. Inside the massive tower case is enough gaming power to keep you running your favourite games for a while to come as well as leaving great scope for future upgradability. With ten internal drive bays, the case has room for up to four optical drives and six HDD which is more than you're going to need for a long time coming. A number of spaces for internal cooling fans and a heap of elbow room to work in also means that it's perfect for those obsessive overclockers out there. Powering it all is a nice fast Athlon XP 1900+. There may be faster CPUs around at the moment but none offer the sheer bang-for-your-buck grunt as the 1900+ does. Likewise the GeForce 4 MX 440 may only rank up there as the 7th fastest card available at the moment but that's still plenty fast enough for gaming purposes.

Performance-wise, the Techbuy Gamers Box is a stable and reliable workhorse achieving a very acceptable 5660 3D marks in 3D mark SE with no anti-aliasing. Those of you who worry about jaggies showing up in their games need not worry too much because the machine pumps out a respectable 3544 3D marks at 2x AA which should be enough to play most modern games with an average frame rate of 40fps. Unfortunately the machine took a substantial performance hit at 4x AA with only 1913 3D marks. This



shouldn't worry hardcore gamers too much - the only video cards around at the moment that can still pump out an excellent frame rate at 4x AA is the GF4 Titanium series, and they'll set you back almost as much as half this entire system. The system only comes with 256MB 333MHz RAM but more sticks are as cheap as chips, should you want more. The guts of this beast are rounded out by a screamingly fast KT333 MoBo, 24x10x40 CD-RW and 7200rpm 40GB Seagate HDD and a Kingmax 10/100 ethernet card. All good stuff.

The icing on this already sweet cake comes in the form of a set of swanky Altec Lansing AVS500 speakers, making for some excellent sound both for gaming and movies (if you install a DVD drive), Windows XP OEM, a Logitech optical mouse and Windows Internet Keyboard. The Techbuy Gamers Box may not be the fastest machine around at the moment but it definitely delivers excellent value for money. If you're having trouble deciding what to upgrade to, take our advice first: save up and buy a Techbuy Gamers Box - it's good for what ails ya.

Daniel Wilks

System Specs:

Microtech Beige Midi-Tower Server Case - No PSU No Fans
 Enermax 300w ATX Power Supply EG301P-VE(FMA) Fan Adjust
 MSI KT3ULTRA VIA KT333 Chipset, Socket A, DDR
 Kingmax 256MB PC2700 333MHz DDR
 AMD Athlon 1900+ XP 1.6GHz 266FSB with Cooling Fan
 Sony 1.44MB Floppy Disk Drive
 Seagate Barracuda 40GB 7200rpm ATA100 IDE HDD
 BenQ 24x10x40 Speed CD-ReWriter
 Abit Siluro GeForce 4 MX440 64MB TV-Out
 Kingmax 10/100 PCI Ethernet Card
 Logitech Optical Mouse
 Microsoft Internet Keyboard OEM
 Altec Lansing AVS500 5-Piece Speaker System
 Microsoft Windows XP Home Edition OEM

Price: \$1950

Distributor: Techbuy

URL: www.techbuy.com.au

Phone: 1300 368 238

It can play all your favourite games at an excellent frame rate and is hard to beat as far as value for money is concerned

SCORE

90

Hercules Prophetview

920 DVi TFT LCD

Hercules impressed us no end with their outstanding Prophetview 720 TFT LCD monitor and much to our continuing delight the Prophetview 920 continues the trend of excellence and goes some way to improving on the formula. Packaged in the same sleek and super sexy blue metal chassis of the 720, the Prophetview 920 boasts a super flat, crystal clear 17" viewable area, roughly making it the equivalent of a 19" CRT. Once again the five face buttons make for easy image adjustment or you can simply hit the auto button and let it do it for you. Though the monitor is quite wide at 440mm, the screen only has a depth of 28mm so it only has a tiny footprint on your desktop. To top it all off the 920 DVi, as the name suggests, supports digital,

making for some of the cleanest images possible.

Enough with the cosmetic details and on to the all-important "How well does it perform?" details. We're pleased to say that the Prophetview 920 DVi is the best gaming oriented LCD monitor that we here at the PowerPlay bunker have seen yet. Hercules has tailored the Prophetview line of monitors for the gaming market so problems such as poor viewing angles and motion blur are almost entirely done away with. With a response time of 25 milliseconds the Prophetview ranks up there as one of the most motion friendly LCD monitors on the market, meaning that the machine hooked up to it quickly became the weapon of choice during our daily Quake-o'clock deathmatch. DVD fared equally well so no worries



there. The only real disappointment with the monitor was the fact that at resolutions other than the optimal 1280x1024 on-screen text looked a little fuzzy. Other than that small gripe the Prophetview 920 DVi offers a beautiful, bright and richly

coloured palette on which you can play all of your favourite games. One final note - if your video card doesn't support DVi, a standard model of the Prophetview 920 is also available for a price of \$1799. Either way it's hard to beat.

Daniel Wilks

Price: \$1999

Distributor: Hercules

URL: au.hercules.com

Phone: (02) 8303 1818

The best gaming LCD monitor bar none at a very reasonable price. We can't wait for the next Prophetview

SCORE
92

Western Digital

Caviar 1200 IDE HDD

Western Digital is responsible for some great hard-drives and the 7200 RPM ATA100 WD1200JB is no exception. The first 120GB iteration had a 2MB cache but this JB model has a humongous 8MB buffer. Who hasn't run out of room on a 20GB drive with games, .WAV and MP3 files? I do all the time and I have Seagate 60 and triple 40s. Speaking of Seagates, this WD spits all over the performance of a Barracuda IV. The WD1200JB has three 40GB platters, however, that's 'metric' GB, boys and girls. It's real binary (1024) size is 111GB which is still fine by me.

At the moment you're not going to see any ATA133 drives from WD because they're chasing after Serial ATA with a bunch of other really smart people. The real world difference between ATA100 and ATA133 is at best minimal, then

again it's a huge jump from ATA66.

If you format & partition this baby (which I have nicknamed Thumper) in Win9x then you'll see that the size that FDISK reports is the full size of the hard disk minus 64GB, which is 47GB in this case. Don't be alarmed as this is a known issue. FDISK uses some 16-bit values internally to calculate the size of the drive. Some of these variables overflow when the drive size is equal to or larger than 64GB (see MS KB Article Q263044). Hey, this is a real issue for Win9x users, so don't laugh! This problem was corrected in Microsoft Windows Millennium Edition and there is no fix available for any version of Windows 95. XP users face the 132GB-barrier thing, so there.

Published seek times are a little optimistic but are not far from my tests. WD claim Read Seek Time



8.9 ms, Write Seek Time 10.9 ms, Track-To-Track Seek Time 2.0 ms, Full Stroke Seek 21.0 ms and Average Latency 4.2 ms. I got a buffered read of 82MB/s and a

sequential read of 47MB/s which is pretty darn good compared to the 60GB Barracuda IV effort of 69MB/s and 37MB/s.

Stuart Calvin

Price: \$499

Distributor: Achieva

URL: www.achieva.com.au

Phone: 02 9742 3288

Easily the chunkiest IDE drive currently available. And cheaper than Seagate

SCORE
90

Gamesurround

Muse 5.1 DVD

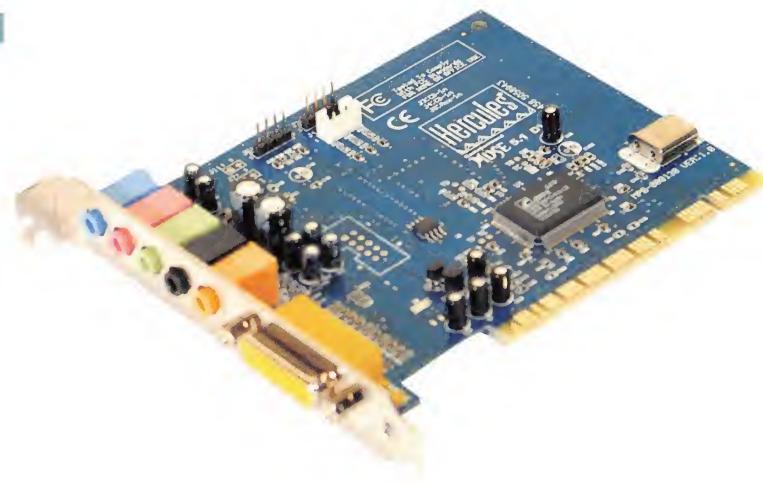
Magine you have a problem

- you want to play all your CD's, DVD and games through your PC but only have crappy AC'97 sound. You've just forked over an obscene amount of money for a new video card and have little else left in your wallet for a sound card. The answer to your problem is simple, scrounge together \$80 and get yourself a Muse 5.1 DVD, the cheapest and most fully features sound card around at the moment. For roughly the same price as the Muse XL the Muse 5.1 delivers blistering surround sound up to 5.1 (as the name strongly suggests) as well as Dolby Digital quality home theatre.

With Sensura based 3D positional audio the card is compatible with just about every game on the market, as it supports Microsoft DirectSound

3D, EAX 1.0, EAX 2.0, A3D 1.0, I3DL2, MacroFX, MultiDrive, ZoomFX and EnvironmentFX. Likewise the card is compatible with most music and theatre sound formats ranging from DirectSound to Dolby Digital. The independent stereo outputs make setting up anywhere up to a six speaker system a breeze so you should have no problem what so ever getting your computer to crank out the tunes in no time flat. As well as the stereo outputs the card features inputs for Mic, Stereo line and a gameport.

The includes software bundle is on the small side but still contains PowerDVD, Acid Xpress music creation software and Hercules MediaStation II which should keep everyone happy. Little else can be said about the Gamesurround Muse 5.1 DVD



apart from the fact that it sounds great, never giving us anything less than clear high definition sound. While the Muse 5.1 DVD pales in comparison to high end

products like the Creative Soundblaster Audigy it still delivers excellent results at an amazingly affordable price.

Daniel Wilks

Price: \$79.95

Distributor: Hercules

URL: au.hercules.com

Phone: 8303 1818

SCORE

88

VisionTek

Xtasy GeForce4 Ti4400

With the release of the incredibly fast GeForce 4 Ti4600 and the still very fast and equally affordable GeForce 4 Ti4200, the GeForce 4 Ti4400 seems to have been lost somewhere as far as consumers are concerned. This is a pity because the Ti4400 is a fantastic card in its own right and the Xtasy is certainly no exception. Spartan is the first word that comes to mind when it comes to the Xtasy packaging, as it contains nothing but the card, reference drivers and Cyberlink Power DVD. If you're looking for a comprehensive software bundle then this card is not for you, but if you're looking for fantastic value and power for money read on.

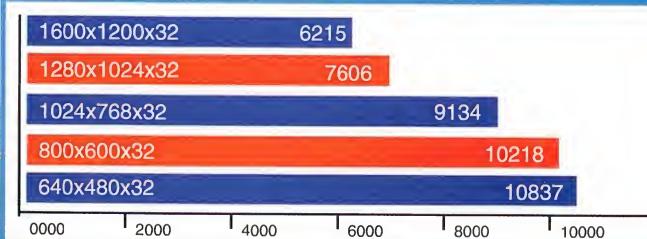
We tested the card with 3D Mark 2001SE on a stable Athlon XP 1600+ system with 256Mb RAM, 7200rpm IDE HDD and

running Windows XP Professional. As you can see from the benchmarks the 128Mb Xtasy Ti4400 is an absolute workhorse. The frame rates fell slightly behind those of the Ti4600 card's we've tested but evened out at higher resolutions and always stayed comfortably ahead of the Ti4200 in benchmarking scores. For those of you out there who are offended by jaggies in their gaming (you know who you are) then you'll be pleased to know that the anti-aliasing works fantastically. At 1024x768x32 with 2xAA the card achieved a very respectable 7689 3D Marks making the speed comparable to a GeForce3 Ti500 running with no AA. Even with 4xAA the card pumped out 5091 3D Marks making it more than fast enough to play all of your favourite games as smooth as you like.

Though not as cheap as the



Benchmarks - 3DMark2001 SE



Ti4200, the Xtasy Ti4400 delivering an excellent power for money ratio. At around \$200 less than the Ti4600 and delivering

similar results at high resolution the Xtasy GF4 Ti4400 is the mid range card of choice.

Daniel Wilks

Price: \$650 approx.

Distributor: Innovision

URL: www.innovision.com.au

Phone: 1300 785 795

SCORE

89

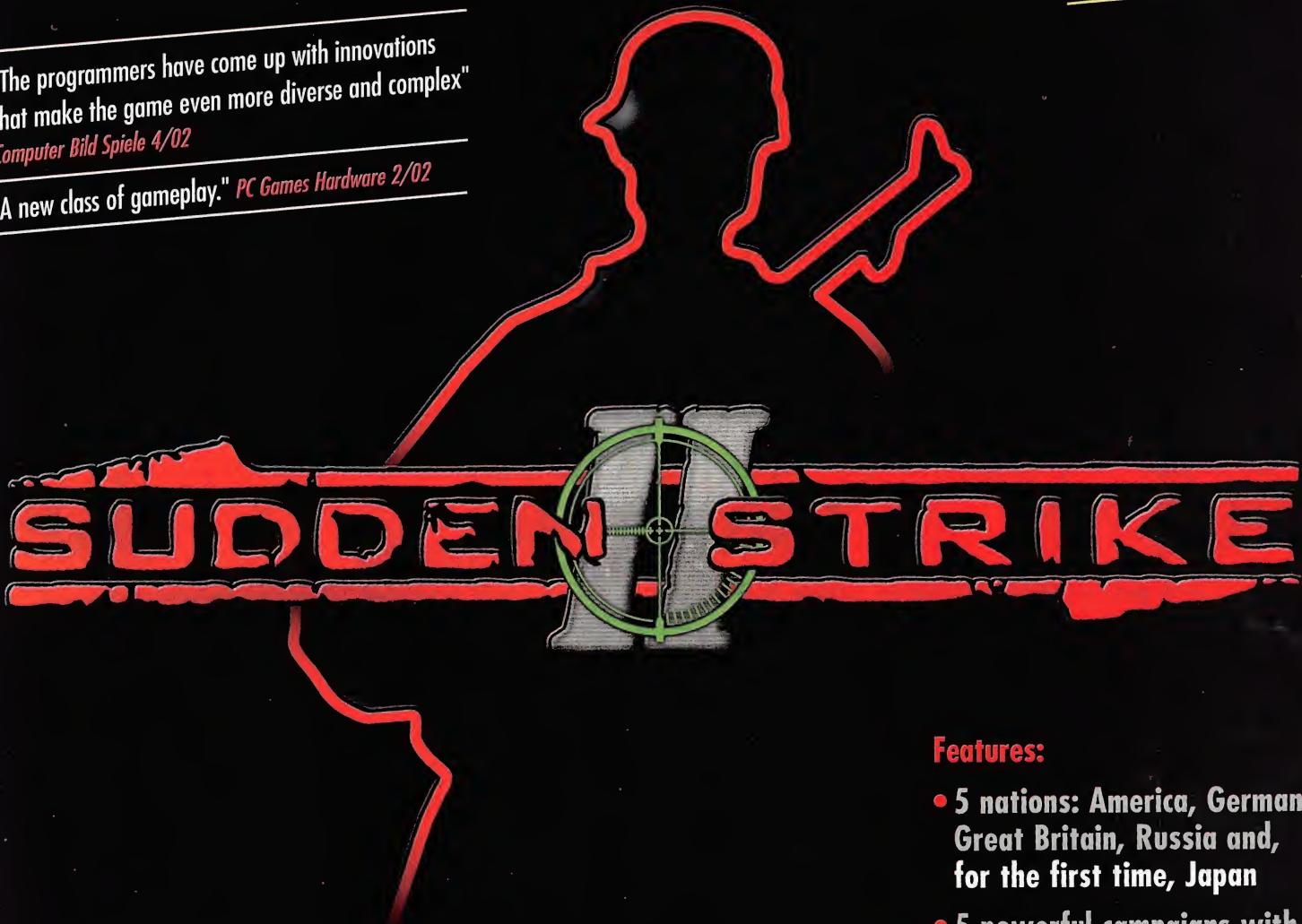
Similar speed to a GeForce 4 Ti4600 with a price tag \$200 less - this is what we want from a video card.

The War is far from over

Release: 2nd half '02

"The programmers have come up with innovations
that make the game even more diverse and complex"
Computer Bild Spiele 4/02

"A new class of gameplay." *PC Games Hardware 2/02*



The war continues with a vengeance. And in Sudden Strike II, there is even more action thanks to the realistic battles and extended controllability. The world is just one huge battlefield - in the air, on land, and now even at sea. Anyone who plays Sudden Strike II will soon know what it's all about: survival!

Features:

- 5 nations: America, Germany, Great Britain, Russia and, for the first time, Japan
- 5 powerful campaigns with more than 40 breathtaking missions
- fascinating multiplayer mode



* This advertisement is in no way intended to glorify the atrocities of the Second World War or to make them appear harmless. We plead that history is dealt with responsibly and would like to point out that this is merely a tactical strategy game.

SETUP

STUART CALVIN WAXES TECHNICAL



LETTER OF THE MONTH

Rohan Playford wins this fabulous and sexy blue steel case from the good folks at www.pccasegear.com just for writing in! No more skinned elbows with this spacious beauty!

PC Case Gear

Quality case accessories and components



HOME NETWORKING

Stuart Calvin teaches Rohan Playford how to frag a friend for free!

ROHAN ASKS

I have managed to cobble together a second PC for the kids but would like to start having some fun with unsuspecting mates (like frag their arses off!!). I know I can use a crossover cable but I want to set things up for the possibility of a third or perhaps fourth PC - like a home LAN party. I'm on Win98SE, I've got some network cards, Cossacks, RA2 and a few other games. What do I do next?

Rohan Playford

Well my friend, you're in luck because this is often the cheapest fun you can have without leaving home. Even if you never go to a community or professional LAN party, you and your mates can still kill each other, 17th century style, or turn those RA2 infantry rushes into nuclear worm food. Here's what we're gonna do. Setup the NICs, install some network software protocols (ooh ooh, sounds hard, but it's not), type in some settings, do some pinging, install some more protocols and frag a friend.

Here's what you need

Two NICs (Network Interface Card) and drivers, a switch or hub with enough ports for each PC plus one spare port (four to six ports are fine), a Phillips-head screwdriver, blue coloured CAT5/twisted pair/patch cable of sufficient length for each PC, Win98 disc, a blank but formatted floppy diskette, accident insurance, pencil and paper and

about two hours. Hubs are cheaper but send out redundant information whereas switches don't. I recommend the Netgear FS105 10/100 megabits/sec switch. It's under \$150 on the street and it will be your best friend because they never break and need no drivers or resources. Most manufacturers sell 'Party Packs' comprising an Ethernet switch/hub, a couple of cards and some cables.

First Up

Connect to the internet, see that it works and disconnect for a last TCP/IP check. Place your Win98SE disc into a drive - hold down the Shift key while you do this. Take one floppy and label it, using any rare parrot feather dipped in your own blood, as "BOOT DISK - do not erase!" Create the boot disk from Control Panel > Add Remove Programs > Startup Disk > Create Disk. Place it somewhere safe, say, near where you leave all of your bills or the vacuum cleaner, so it won't get touched. Let go of the Shift key if you're still holding it down.

Hardware

Make sure you have 10/100 megabit NICs with the (RJ45) oversize telephone socket on the back-pane. My tip is to buy second-hand 3Com, SMC or Intel NICs because Win98 will PnP them easily or purchase new NICs with drivers included. Using some other second hand cards, with no drivers around, is

determined thrill seeking on your part. Visit the FCC.com site and follow the onscreen instructions if you have no idea who made your card and you don't have drivers.

Shut down again and switch it off at the power point but leave it plugged into the wall socket (for earthing). Urban legends advise to leave it switched on for "earth leakage" reasons but this is likely to earn you or your PC a visit to Accident and Emergency. Besides, the standby voltage is still working and we don't want to frizzle any components. Whip off the furthermost side from the rear ports. Look down. The AGP slot is brown and filled with your ex-NASA, 3D modelling graphics adaptor and any ISA slots are black - leave these alone. Any black ones the size of a PCI slot mean you are bad at installing cards - get someone to help. Look for a vacant, white PCI slot and insert the NIC, check the seating and wind a bolt into the back pane. Reassemble and fire it up. Do the same for your other PC. OK, your killer game machine will be the Host while all other PCs connected to it will be Clients.

Network Protocols and Software

Now some things to note. You'll see all this stuff in a little while, so grab that pen and paper. Don't use a DHCP server to assign TCP/IP information for your Clients. Don't change the DialUp Networking TCP/IP settings on the Host except to uncheck "Log on

to Network" on the Server Types tab of your DialUp Connection properties. Don't use a HOST or LMHOST table on any machine. Don't install a Gateway for the Host and don't enable DNS or WINS configuration for any machine. Phew, got all that? It's important. Write down 192.168.0.1 and learn it. Use it as the IP for the NIC on the Host. The first Client gets 192.168.0.2, the second Client 192.168.0.3 and so on. The sub-net mask for each PC is the same - 255.255.255.0.

Each Computername must be unique - "deathFromMaboy" is good as long as no other machine has the same name. The Workgroup must be the same - "KICKAss" is good, so is "mYlaN" - just make them all the same. Computer Description is optional but I use "Stu's Graveyard" or "MySlum", depending on editorial deadlines. So, on all PCs, go to the Win98SE Control Panel/Network, click the Identification tab and fill in the three boxes. Click OK and don't worry if you get a message about your Network being "incomplete".

Check for TCP/IP

In most cases, installing your NIC will also install the TCP/IP protocol, if not already present on your system, that your PC needs to communicate with the Clients as well as the internet. If you are already setup for the internet then TCP/IP should still be installed and be "bound" to your NIC. Take a look in Network Settings and

you should see something like "TCP/IP (Workgroup) -> F5D5000, PCI Card/Desktop Network PCI Card"

or

"TCP/IP (Workgroup) -> 32bit Intel, Fast Ethernet Card"

or

Whatever your NIC is, it should be described here. iBound means that the NIC and software protocols have been connected so that they work together.

Check for Microsoft Networks

After rebooting, Windows may have given you the opportunity to select network protocols and bindings. There are other protocols to install but we need to ensure that TCP/IP is working first, not only over the Internet but between PCs as well. Other working protocols can mask problems with TCP/IP over the LAN. But we do need Client for Microsoft Networks and if this is not the first entry in Network Settings, then click Add, highlight Client, click Add, select Microsoft to the left and the top Network Client to the right, then click OK. Check that Client for Microsoft Networks is your Primary Network Logon below the Add button. Reboot if asked.

A known Windows annoyance is the problematic Client for Microsoft Networks on startup. Sometimes you get that logon window and sometimes you don't - Microsoft doesn't offer any solutions other than to advise, "Please reinstall the Client Network software" - bummer. If you don't get the logon window on startup you will need to check the Log Off feature on the Start button. If it says Log Off [Computername], where Computername is, for example, death-HroMab0ve or whatever you named it, then you are actually logged on. If not, then log off and log on. You may be asked to create a new profile for "this user". Please do so.

TCP/IP Settings for the Network NIC in the Host

Check that Client for Microsoft Networks is your Primary Network

Logon below the Add button.

IP Address. In the Configuration tab of your Host Network Settings panel, double-click the TCP/IP binding to your NIC, NOT the TCP/IP binding to your DialUp Adapter. Click the IP Address tab and select the Specify an IP Address radio button. In the IP Address line, enter the Host IP - 192.168.0.1 (the dots are already entered) - and check the entry. In the Subnet Mask line, enter 255.255.255.0.

WINS Configuration. Select the Disable WINS Resolution radio button.

Gateway. Remove and clear all entries.

DNS. Remove and clear all entries and choose the Disable DNS radio button.

Bindings. Tick the Client for Microsoft Networks entry. If it's not present then reinstall this protocol.

Advanced. The Allow Binding to ATM property is set to the Yes value. Tick the box "Set this protocol to be the default protocol" which is down the bottom.

NetBIOS. Untick this but if it's greyed out then leave as is. Then click OK and reboot if asked. Don't forget to log on as [Computername]!

TCP/IP Settings for the Network NIC in the Client

Install and check for TCP/IP and Client for Microsoft Networks in the same way you did for the Host.

IP Address. In the Configuration tab of your Host Network Settings panel, double-click TCP/IP. Click the IP Address tab and select the Specify an IP Address radio button. In the IP Address line, enter the Host IP - 192.168.0.2 (the dots are already entered) - and check the entry. In the Subnet Mask line, enter 255.255.255.0. Note that this is the second PC but the first Client.

WINS Configuration. Select the Disable WINS Resolution radio button.

Gateway. Set to 198.162.0.1 - the IP of the Host - and click Add.

DNS. Remove and clear all entries and choose the Disable DNS radio button.

Bindings. Tick the Client for Microsoft Networks entry. If it's not present then reinstall this protocol. Uncheck any other entries.

Advanced. Set the Allow Binding to ATM property to Yes. Tick the box "Set this protocol to be the default protocol".

NetBIOS. Untick this, but if it's greyed out then leave as is. Click OK and reboot if asked. Don't forget to log on as the [Computername]! The TCP/IP entry for the Clients does not look the same as the Host. As long as all of the entries I specify are present then it's OK. At this stage, Network Settings should have Client for Microsoft Networks, the NIC and TCP/IP. If NetBIOS or IPX/SPX are shown, leave them as is. Any other entries should be removed.

Ping Ping Ping!

Testing TCP/IP. For the Host and Clients, click Start > Programs > MS-DOS Prompt. In this DOS box, type:

ping 127.0.0.1

and press [Enter]

What you will see, if TCP/IP works, is something like this:

Pinging 127.0.0.1 with 32 bytes of data

Reply from 127.0.0.1: bytes=32 time<10ms TTL=64

Ping statistics for 127.0.0.1:

Packets: Sent = 4,

Received = 4, Lost = 0 (0% loss)

Approximate round trip times in milliseconds:

Minimum = 0ms, Maximum = 0ms, Average = 0ms

Hoorah! TCP/IP works and you can also type "localhost" and get the same response. If things aren't OK, you'll see this:

Pinging Computername [127.0.0.1] with 32 bytes of data Request timed out.

Or this:

Destination host unreachable

In the first case, TCP/IP is not installed correctly and in the second case you have entered the wrong IP address.

After confirming that ping localhost works, you can now ping each PC. On the Host, type ping 192.168.0.2 (the first Client IP) and press [Enter]. You should see something like this:

Pinging 192.168.0.2 with 32 bytes of data

Reply from 192.168.0.2: bytes=32

time<10ms TTL=64

Then ping the Host from the Client - i.e. ping 192.168.0.1 (the Host IP) - to get a similar result. If something is not right, just uninstall TCP/IP and reinstall it.

IPX/SPX

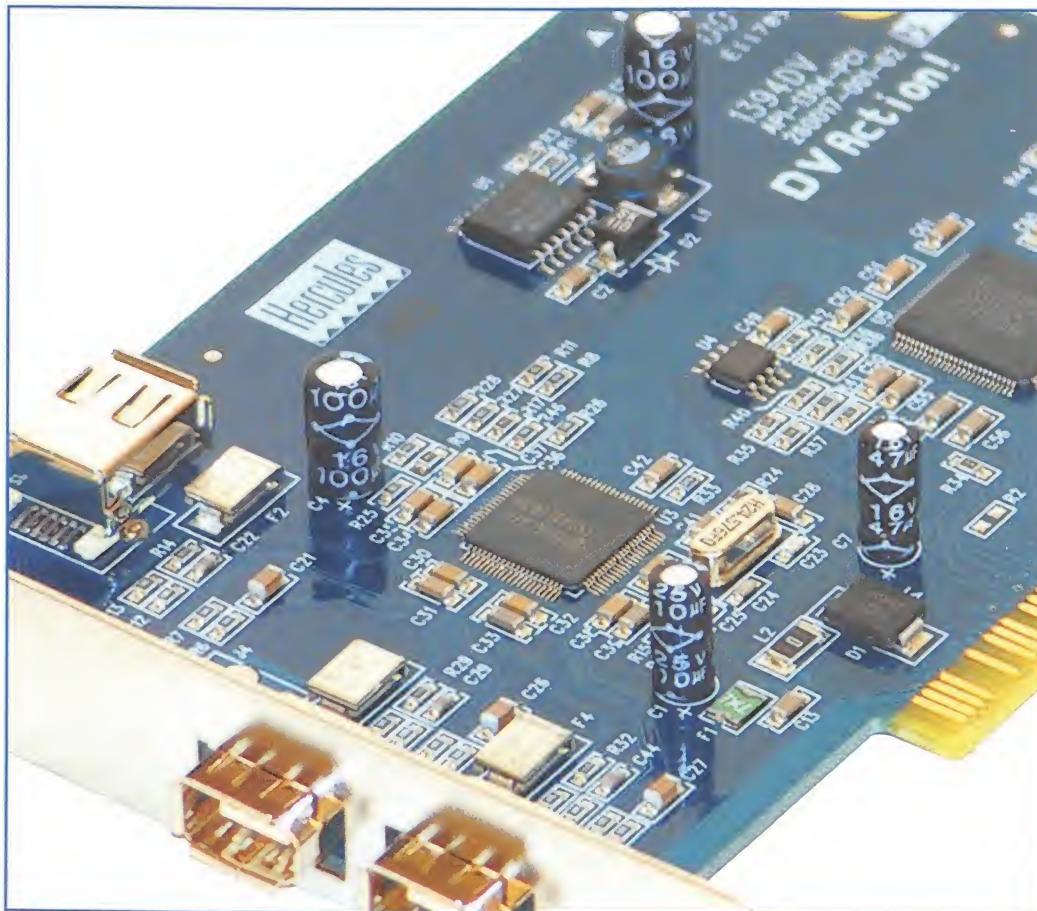
When all is well, you can add the protocol IPX/SPX developed by Novell. It is probably the most popular choice for gaming across a small network, however some games will run in only one protocol or the other so you do need both.

It is vitally important that no two computers on your network have the same IP address. It is also vital that the Workgroup name is the same for each computer. If you can get ping localhost working for each PC just using TCP/IP, then any faults between PCs will be in the cabling or the switch/hub. The final test is to frag a friend. Creating and joining network games is as easy as following the on-screen instructions. Enjoy!



SETUP

STUART CALVIN WAXES TECHNICAL



Mental Max Payne

I own Max Payne, which ran perfectly until recently. Subsequent to a WinXP update, the game stopped working. Is this the problem? Anyway, upon launching the game, before the setup screen appears and the actual game starts up, an error message pops up reading, "Max Payne requires a DirectX 8 compatible display adaptor. Please consult the troubleshooting readme in the installation folder." Having referred to the troubleshooting

guide and reinstalled the game, I am still confronted by the error message. My video card is running current drivers and I do have DirectX 8, but the problem prevails. Please help me get back to playing Max Payne!

Nick G

Well, you nailed it Nick - a WinXP update, unless you changed or installed something else, has deprived you of gaming goodness. What does the DirectX Diagnostic Program (ddiag.exe) tell you? Have you tried a System Restore Point of your choice? Ask yourself, before updating, "Why is it that I want to update?" I know that some updates have uninstallers, often as a separate but generally undocumented feature or file. Try reinstalling all drivers (chipset, video and sound) as well as DirectX. Alternatively, remove the manufacturer's drivers and allow XP to load its native drivers. As a last resort, "freshen" the OS with another install.



MOHAA Troubleshooting

When I start Medal of Honor, it goes into a normal popup showing the activities taking place in which the words are yellow. As it goes into a grey screen, loading fails or stops and reverts back to Windows desktop with a resolution of 640x480 while my actual resolution is 800x600. I did most of the MOHAA FAQ solutions which they said would fix the problem, like freeing up most of the resources which may cause conflicts with the game, making sure it is DirectX 8 (which I got installed!) and 16-bit colour display instead of 32-bit (which I always had on). I tried all the troubleshooting, but nothing actually made a difference. My PC satisfies the system requirements.

Johnny H.

I'm not sure which MoBo model you own, but it sounds like a hybrid, which means that only Gigabyte can provide you with chipset drivers - update the MoBo

chipset as Step 1 from <http://www.gigabyte.com.tw/support.htm>. I'm assuming that the SIS chipset is onboard video and it must be disabled in the BIOS, given your Savage adaptor - is it the Diamond Stealth III S540 (S3 Savage 4)? Step 2, check for drivers at http://www.s3graphics.com/DRVVI_EW.HTM (read the licence - you have to "accept" before download). I suspect you're after this file: "82031wmerowlgo.zip, 1.2M, 2000 Nov 7, Logo'd: Savage4 Windows ME Version 8.20.31 S3_AGP". Have you tried another 3D intensive game like Renegade? My honest opinion is that your graphics adaptor just isn't up to it.

Captain Insane

Firstly, I need to know how to change the engine of a game (C&C Renegade) because it sux. Is there any way that I can swap it with the Half-Life engine or similar?

Secondly, I have a 16MB VANTA/VANTA LT video card which some games detect as a TNT2, some a Voodoo 3, some a GeForce 2. Is this normal? Should I upgrade it or wait for a new video card to come out that's cheap?

Thirdly, is there any way to use an installing thing like the install program to install my new Beta 2 mod for HL? Right now I have to use WinZip to unzip it to the HL folder.

Fourthly, is there any way to use Nintendo64 games on my new GBA? I don't have any GBA games yet and I want to play all my N64 games on it.

Weird Guy From NZ



(1) Uh... no.

(2) The card identification issue is known. It's a bit like the Sound Blaster compatible option in game sound card setup. I know NZ is a little more expensive than here, but look around for a GeForce3 (GTS or Pro). A GeForce4 440MX, for example, would require a MoBo upgrade to AGP 2.0 (2x/4x) compliant. Even a GeForce2 MX400 is a worthy of attention.

(3) No. Not unless someone has developed one - check out the mod sites.

(4) No, they have completely different shaped cartridges and the GBA doesn't have anywhere near the 3D rendering power of the N64.



Duron Upgrade

1) I am looking to upgrade my PC. I am running a Duron 750 on a Soltek SL75KAV motherboard, with a 20GB Quantum ATA100 disk, 128MB of PC133 SDRAM, as well as a 64MB GeForce2 MX200. I am thinking of upgrading to a AthlonXP 1700. Is that possible on my motherboard? Will I have to put on a socket or upgrade my motherboard?

2) If I decided to stick with my motherboard, what would be the highest processor I could install? I would prefer to stay with the Athlon.

3) Is my motherboard any good? **4)** Approximately how much would it cost me to upgrade to an appropriate level. Would I need to purchase DDR RAM?

5) Last but not least, how do the people who 'star' in your tech sections of PCPP get in there?

Is there a special person I should be emailing for my technical enquiries?

David Rowe

Soltek, now based in Taiwan, makes overclocking MoBos and uses the OEM moniker Magicpro. There are two models and several versions of the SL-75KAV, a very good board when it was released. The -X model in version 3 incorporates the latest VIA KT133A chipset (and VT82C686B) which officially supports a 133MHz FSB. Both support AGP Pro at 4x. Out-of-the-box speed gave 1.2GHz but your support page is at <http://61.13.211.131/English/download/main/75KAV.htm> and may provide for greater multipliers and thus accommodate faster chips - but we're not really talking

AthlonXP+ CPUs. If you can find a Thunderbird compatible with your current rig, I'd go for that and jam in another stick of 128MB PC133 SDRAM. An Athlon Thunderbird 1.2GHz or even a 1.4GHz chip may be the go here and you'd really notice the difference. You will need a new MoBo and DDR RAM if you upgrade to the XP+ series, not to forget checking peak power output of your PSU - most 250-watters will only deliver about 135w across all the rails at the one time. Some of these new CPUs are pulling 70-80w to kill bad guys... As for your last question, it was something I'd pondered occasionally. Mail me all the hard stuff. If there's anything easy I just toss it to the Ed. (Thanks mate - Ed)

Missing ROMS

I have a Duron 1GHz, an ASUS A7VL133-VM MoBo, 40GB disk, Win98SE, 52x CD-ROM, 16x10x40 burner, with MoBo integrated graphics and sound. The problem is that I can't access my CD-ROM drive and burner. I used it before and it was all fine, but now I can't access it. I go to My PC and I can't see either my CD-ROM drive or burner. The BIOS seems to be able to detect the drives, but I still can't access them.

Franz

This happens at times because an IDE or busmaster driver heads north. The BIOS can see them because the detection method at that fundamental hardware level is different to the system enumeration (just after the POST) which is different to Windows detection. The problem is usually, but not limited to, corrupt chipset drivers (best bet!), a loose ribbon cable, a loose power cable, a crummy setting in the BIOS like "enable IDE 1 only", a corrupt ASPI layer file, rogue virtual device drivers (.VXDs), a software installation or a dead device. Two dead devices are unlikely but possible. Win9x (and variants) can only detect an optical device if APIX.VXD (windows\iosubsys) and WNASPI32.DLL (windows\system) are present and working. There are more versions of WNASPI32.DLL around than tea leaves in China. The Ahead Software version belongs in the Nero folder and is 172099 bytes. The Adaptec version 4.60 (1021) is 45056 bytes. APIX.VXD is 22603 bytes. Rule #1 this month is, "Update your chipset drivers." Please do this - websites are detailed in this issue and PCPP#75.

EZ Coaster Creator

Hi, I'm having trouble with copying games onto CD. Currently I am using Fantom CD 1.2 and have tried CloneCD with my Liteon LTR-24102b burner and everytime I burn a game on a CD and run it, it always comes up with "can not find CD. Reinsert and restart application." Its been happening ever since I last formatted my disk, so I formatted again and still the same thing. Before I burn to CD I always test the image and it works great. Where is it going wrong? Is my burner dodging me out or is it that the programs are not compatible?

Leet Hackzor

Copying is a mischievous word. Let's call it "backing-up original software that I own for safe-keeping". Now that we have Macrovision looking somewhere else for the moment onto business. I know it's disheartening

owning a premier burner and crapping out with coasters. I guess you test your image using Daemon Tools with emulation, right? And I'm also guessing that you may play some of these backups from the Liteon burner? I'm also guessing that maybe some of your drive letters have changed? These guesses point to probable causes of backups not working. I'll explain. Daemon Tools has been blacklisted, again and recently, by Sony's Macrovision. This means that the SafeDisc copy protection guard module is "looking" for the virtual SCSI drive(s) that power the phantom CD-ROMs - update to D-Tools 3.11 from <http://www.daemon-tools.com/main.htm>. SafeDisc v2.4.x and SecuROM *new* check for an ATIP (Absolute Time In Pre-groove thingy, hidden in the wobble in the spiral, well, that's for later), found only on CD-R/W discs and not on pressed discs. If you play SD2.4.x or SecuROM *new* protected games from your burner, you will need a Hide ATIP program running, like CloneCD's Hide CD-R Media, or install and play from a non ATIP-reading device like a DVD-ROM or CD-ROM. Titles such as The Sims family of discs have their installation drive letter "hard-wired" into the registry. Installing from R:\ but playing from J:\ is really frustrating because J:\ ain't gonna work no matter how much angular velocity you put into your monitor back-slap. Angular velocity is good for coasters. Just get it through the window before it boomerangs. Check out club.cdfreaks.com for help.



SETUP

STUART CALVIN WAXES TECHNICAL

Picture Perfect (Not!)

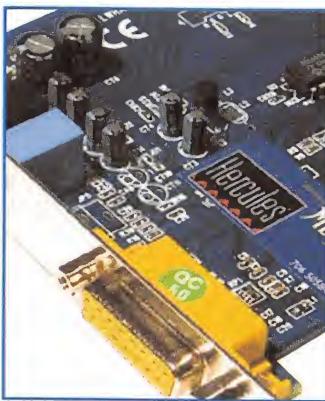
I've got two problems with my new PC. It is an AMD AthlonXP 2000+ with a Leadtek GeForce4 MX, a LG Flatron 759FT plus, a Sony DVD and 24x writer and an MSI K7T266 Pro2 motherboard.

1) When I start up my PC and turn on the monitor, no picture comes up and even if I leave the monitor on all night and start to play in the morning it won't work. If you restart it around five times, the starting picture of the loading XP comes up.

2) When I've played Any game for around two to three hours without any warning the games just shutdown and reverts to Win XP with no illegal op or error message. Now this problem makes me lose my precious hair - e.g. I was playing Stronghold and after an hour of making an invasion (because I've finished the game) using boiling oil, pitch and terrain... you guessed it, it cut out. Please help, I'm not sure my hair can last.

Phillip South

If your PC is new, is it not covered by warranty? Please return to the store for help! Your monitor will go into standby when you shutdown your PC, so only turn it off if you have to - if it's not doing this then the BIOS (ACPI) or PnP for monitors is whacky. What are you restarting "around five times"? The monitor or the PC? Does the monitor play-up in any other way? If it's the PC that needs a kick in the guts to get going, something is not really good in your "new PC". Stuff going flaky after an hour or so points to a slow build up of heat somewhere. The XP2000+



can dissipate some serious wattage, as can the GeForce4; hard disks can get very hot too. If it's just a 3D game banging out then your graphics adaptor is overheating and "resetting". You could even have corrupted video drivers, incorrect drivers or drivers not properly installed. Have you installed the latest chipset drivers? Oh, did I say to please take your rig back to the store before you do too much else (...aaahhh, nice rig, btw).

BSU

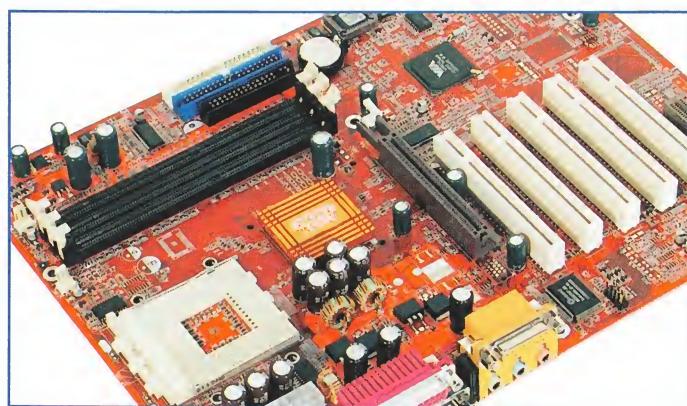
I just purchased a copy of No-One Lives Forever following a glowing review in your mag. Can you imagine my distress when I installed it and ran into a succession of nightmares? It installed fine but has launched maybe once in 172 million key-mashing tries. It just kinda gets to the first splash screen and hangs, leaving me no alternative than to hit the ol' CTRL-ALT-DEL. Even then everything is in slow motion. Boo. Also, as soon as the game disc is in my d: drive when I go to explore My PC, it opens up really slowly and tells me either I have "0 objects" or my d: drive is non-existent. The d: drive also makes funny "whir click" noises while the offending disc is in there. If I remove the disc everything becomes fine again. All my other discs run 100% in there... it's all too freaky. Any help would be greatly appreciated. Here's your chance PCPP... your chance to stop the tears of a tormented individual (even if I am from New Zealand) and let me get on with...well... blowing shit up.

Danny

Only 172 million? Do you have any other 3D games? Do they work? Update to the latest video and MoBo chipset drivers, re-install DirectX and run dxdiag.exe to test it out. Or, it could be that the disc is somehow damaged so try it in another machine.

Graphic Card Hazard

I'm having some trouble with my PCI ProLink PixelView 64MB



GeForce2 MX200. The card was installed in WinXP. For the first couple of weeks, the graphics ran like a charm. Then I started noticing that Max Payne would show one or two triangles after a couple of seconds. Then it got worse. I installed C&C Renegade and there were heaps of triangles. But the triangles were seen as warped textures and sometimes different textures would be seen with the other textures. This only happens to Direct3D games and not OpenGL games, so I emailed PixelView and they replied that the clockspeed should be lowered and/or some more heatsinks will do the job. So I first tried to set the clock speed of the graphics card. But the only clock speed that wouldn't display a lot of triangles in most Direct3D games was at a whopping 215x175. So then I installed the latest ProLink drivers and that did nothing. So I downloaded both Detonator XP and the driver after that and followed the instructions properly. That made the games faster but the triangles would still come up. I deleted XP completely, reformatted my hard-drive and put Win98 on it. The same process will still happen but now the games freeze on the spot really fast. And this only happens to Direct3D. I have tried all versions of it - 7.0, 8.0a, 8.1. OpenGL games work perfectly. Maybe a little dodgy but that is because I only have a Celeron 850 with 256MB - not even good enough to beat the Beastie. At least it can run games like Max Payne and others on the almost high setting with 32-bit enabled.

Should I buy the heat sinks? What about if they don't work? Can you help me with my situation because I am starting to get dizzy and sick playing games with triangles and if nothing works I might as well buy a PS2. However I am on a strict budget because I am only 16.

Roger

What did intensive 3D games run like before you installed the PixelView? You say it ran well for a couple of weeks so did you install, modify or otherwise play with your system? Now that you're back on Win98, you have to install the latest chipset & video drivers and ensure that DirectX is working by running dxdiag.exe and looking for the error messages. Max Payne on a 766-850 Celeron at 32-bit with a PCI graphics adaptor is no fun at the best of times but as you say, maybe a little dodgy. Asking the consumer to add a heatsink to a retail graphics adaptor is, in my opinion, the dodgy issue here. I don't think that this card is going to get hot enough to warrant additional measures. Make sure your case fan works and that all internal cabling is tied back and out of the way of the airflow.

Holy Colliding Capacitors

I've heard that the Ti 4600 line of video cards won't actually fit on the EpoX 8KHA+ motherboard due to the large fan and some capacitors colliding. Is this true for all GF4 Ti cards and did EpoX fix this problem with its newer 8K3A board?

Matthew Spratt

setup@pcpowerplay.com.au



Here's what EPoX had to say after a two hour turn-around: "We have tested GeForce4 Ti4600 card of Leadtek, MSI, ELSA and Gainward. The cards can be installed on 8KHA+ and 8K3A, and we modified the capacitor size to suit other GeForce4 AGP cards." Thankyou EpoX.

Pick a Card, Any Card

My budget allows me to get a Leadtek GeForce4 MX440, which

THE GOLDEN RULES

If you encounter problems with a game or hardware in general, try these steps:

- If the PC is under warranty then take it back to the store
- Don't leave the case open when running - direct a desk fan onto it if you do this
- Remove any 240v lighting you have in your case
- Install the latest video drivers or updates
- Install the latest chipset drivers (check for hybrid chipsets on the MoBo - manufacturers' drivers only in most cases!)
- Install the latest sound card drivers or updates
- Install DirectX (again and again if necessary and run dxdiag.exe for troubleshooting)
- Test the disc on another PC
- Re-route and tie back internal cabling
- Enable DMA in Device Manager
- Use the correct cables - 40-pin/80-conductor IDE cable for ATA66 and faster
- Install case fans (bottom front for "suck" and top rear for "blow")

is about \$250 or a GeForce 3 Ti200 (about \$350), which is what I'll get if I can dig up the extra money. Then I noticed that I could get a Sparkle 128MB GeForce3 Ti200 for \$295, only \$45 more than the MX440 and technically a superior card than the other two. Now I know that the Sparkle cards generally have no extra software apart from the drivers, but is there any difference in quality when compared to the Leadteks i.e. overheating or dropping out in the middle of MOHAA. If not, it is a great buy seeing as though most 128MB GeForce3 Ti200 are up at around \$450.

Also, I know you did that modem roundup in PCPP#70, but what is the best internal modem (56k) that you can get.

Jerry Popadopalous

P.S. What does PCMCIA mean?

Well, now that PCPP has done some reviews recently, this should be easy. Yes, it's a budget thing and I've never seen so many kick-ass cards at the one time for reasonable prices, but you need to read the fine print. How much future-proofing do you want to pay for? Do you want a card with features that the game developers haven't catered for? Do you hang out at viaarena.com and 280fps instead of 282fps makes you shudder and wonder if your PCI latency is too high or do you just want to see no pixelation at 800x600 with 16-bit colour? Keeping your cool also means adding a case fan front and rear and tying back all internal cabling, so I don't see a problem with these cards. 128MB of memory was dreamt up by the marketing people. If they showed you the math, for what you and I do, there's no way that 128MB is going to get used, even with Front Side Anti-Aliasing up around 1600x1200. My experience is that Dynalink internal modems are cheap and fast. PCMCIA stands for "People Can't Memorise PC Industry Acronyms" or "Personal Computer Memory Card International Association".

Chip and Chips

Is it possible to have a 256MB DDR PC2100 chip and a 256MB DDR PC2700 chip installed together on my K7T266A motherboard? If I could, do I have to change any settings?

Ee Cheng Khor

Yes... but. It supports 2.5v 184-pin DIMM DDR SDRAM but at PC1600 and PC2100 speeds only. PC2700 is nice (166/333MHz) but only if you have the motherboard to go with it like the MSI KT3 Ultra. DDR SDRAM is also known as SDRAM-II, DDR DRAM and DSDRAM (Double-Speed DRAM). PC1600 DDR SDRAM running at 100/200MHz will produce about 1.6GB/s memory bandwidth. PC2100 running at 133/266MHz will produce 2.1GB/s memory bandwidth. Any PC2700 modules installed will only run at 133/266MHz.

Show-Off

I have a problem with my 3D Prophet 4500 + TV Out. I have the latest driver version - 3DPK-9X-14028. Every game I play produces glitches including flashing rectangles and parts of the screen shaking. Medal of Honour is unplayable and Giants is only just tolerable. Serious Sam even looks terrible - and that is the game I'm meant to "show off". I actually wrote to Hercules and, lo and behold, got a reply - they think it is a conflict with the motherboard. So I went to www.intel.com (I think I have an i850) and tried to download an update. This has proven to be a nightmare. Links lead nowhere and I don't even know if I'm doing the right thing. The only other info I know is that it's an ABIT TH7-Raid. Any help would be great (even if it's only a point in the right direction).

Shabira

All ABIT TH7 board owners should be aware of the AGP voltage issues associated with their board. Since the Intel 845/850 chipsets support AGP 1.5V only, plugging an AGP 3.3V only AGP card into Intel 845/850

motherboards will burn the MCH chip and cause motherboard damage. Details here: <http://fae.abit.com.tw/eng/faq/qa/001/2001101104.htm>

Motherboard glitches will produce video and sound problems, particularly if software is not installed properly. There are more than a few things you can do to set this straight. In order, try the following installs until you are happy with the results:

1. Video card drivers (again - sorry!)
2. Intel Chipset Software Installation Utility Version v3.20.1008 from here: http://developer.intel.com/design/software/drivers/platform/4301/inf_utility/lic_infinst.htm (you have to click "I Agree" down the bottom of this page)
3. HPT370 RAID controller drivers v2.31 from here: http://www.highpoint-tech.com/370drivers_down.htm
4. Install the latest DirectX support (v8.1 is on the PCPP#72 CD) from here: <http://www.microsoft.com/windows/directx/>
5. BIOS Revision th736 (ID 36 dated 15 Oct 2001) from here: <ftp://ftp.abit.com.tw/pub/download/fae/>
6. Integrated AC'97 Digital Audio controller - reinstall the drivers for the onboard sound if you have this enabled (they are on the ABIT installation CD). If you use a different sound card then make sure that the onboard sound is disabled in the BIOS and check for updated sound card drivers from the manufacturer.

If your FrontSide Bus is overclocked then wind it back. Keep CD-ROMs and the like off the RAID controllers and check Device Manager for UDMA peripherals not running in DMA Mode. With any luck, just the chipset driver update will fix all.



THE BEAST

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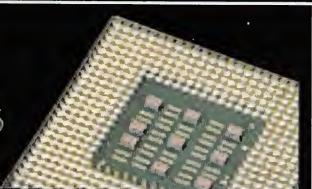


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Panasonic 3.5" Floppy

For those times when you haven't got a boot CD, the 3.5" floppy is invaluable. Also handy for transferring files via the old "sneaker-net" method.
\$25 www.gamedude.com.au (07) 3841 5144



Adaptec 29160 SCSI

Whether you need to connect a SCSI HDD, tape backup unit or external SCSI device, Adaptec have been number one since the late eighties.
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**TOTAL BEAST
VALUE: \$18035**



BEASTIE

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\$295

512MB Kingston DDR RAM

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Full legacy support, dual channel raid and onboard Ethernet.
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40GB Seagate Barracuda Series

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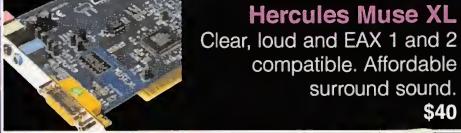
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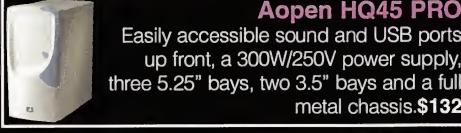
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**TOTAL BEASTIE
VALUE: \$1969**

ORACLE

Write to the Oracle at:

The Oracle
PC PowerPlay
78 Renwick St
Redfern
NSW 2016
oracle@pcpowerplay.com.au

So you want some more then do ya? Do ya punk? Huh? More tips, solutions and even the occasional cheat? The Oracle has returned, and he's here to stay, so get on the blower, the email and the postal service and fling your questions his way. If you're very lucky, he may even condescend to answer them...

Deus Ex

I picked up the Game of the Year edition of DX and love it but I'm stuck. In New York, in Paul's apartment when he tells me to run for it, I just can't seem to keep him alive when the UNATCO troops are onto him - I want my brother to live! Is there any way to do this? Any really useful augmentations I should have?

FyneArkel

Congratulations FyneArkel! You're an idiot. Many thanks from all those who haven't played this old game yet and who might have wanted a crack at it without the story RUINED for them. Such things matter not to the Oracle, so to your piddling question.

If you want Paul to live, you need to kill all the agents roaming about in his apartment building. The two knocking rather impolitely at the front door are the immediate concern. I suggest a LAM on the wall near the door for a nice surprise when these UNATCO stooges step through. Then just run ahead and clear the place out. Make sure you're using any of your various WEAPONS at this point, please. You'll be surprised at how important Paul's survival is (or perhaps not).

Freedom Force

How the hell do you complete the secondary objectives in the second mission of Freedom Force? You have to knock out all the thugs but you can't alert the guards either. Is this possible?

MasterX

Well MasterX, who can't even master the SECOND mission of this lovely game, are you indeed the master of anything?



What really goes on in the Vatican

Ha Ha Ha! Verily you are master of nothing. And so I will help you, dear fool.

Firstly, you must stick to the rooftops to avoid detection. Many of my chums down at the Oracle League believe you must start your assault on the thugs near the front gate in the

south-west of the map but I can manage the whole operation from the building where you enter the fray, in the south-east.

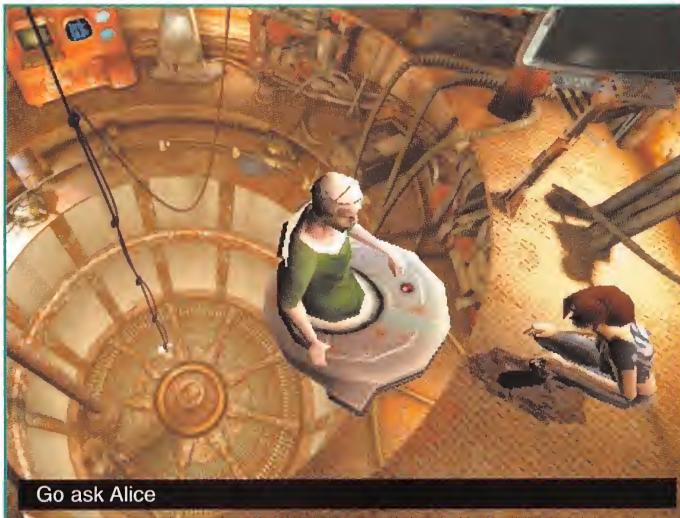
As a great man once said, "Divide and conquer!" Any time you get into a fistcuffs, finish off the devils and then retreat back to the heights to avoid

detection. Observe the thugs' patrol routes and take note when they are out of vision. This is often the difference between getting rid of a couple of thugs and missing one of them, who manages to reach the alarm. When a patrolling thug is away from his buddies, use the opportunity to attack the smaller group of thugs before quickly retreating to the roof to avoid detection. Then, dear MistressX, when the nasty patroller returns, give him a whack.

The pistol thugs will often be the ones that run for the alarm house, so take care of them first. The bat thugs are usually happy to just wade into the fight. Use your Patriot Missile to stun groups of enemies and then step in for the clean up. With observation and perseverance, you too can achieve secondary objectives. Of course, MasterX will also need to save every five paces due to his terminal lack of wits. Ha Ha Ha!



iWOOB? Ah! Upside down, upside down



The Longest Journey

I'm stuck at the beginning of the game in Through the Mirror. I know I need to get this key that is on the tracks in the subway station but I can't get it. There's a rubber duck stuck down outside my window and I can't get it. Is that essential? What do I do?

Cass

The Oracle began his days long years ago, in the mists of time, playing just this brand of inane puzzler. Of course, back then they were funny with oddly shaped characters. They weren't like episodes of Felicity, or tampon commercials or liberal sexuality lessons. Adventure? Not my idea of it. It's called The Longest Journey because there are so many stupidly illogical puzzles to overcome. Of course, you lack even an ounce of sense if you failed to get that stupid duck. You need it.

You picked up the bread from the cafe, right? Of course, you did - this isn't KQ5, now is it? Use the bread on the floating rubber ducky. This provokes a bird's attack on the poor inflationary and it floats away. Use the chain to pull up the clothes line. Take this item, you need it. Just outside the Fringe, you will find the deflated rubber duck. Take it, you'll need it.

If you haven't already done so, take the Band-Aid off it. Remember the clamp you got from that other stupid puzzle

with the gas valve? You need that too. Combine the clothes line with the clamps in your inventory. Use your mouth on the duck to blow it up, then use it on the clamp with clothes line thing. Now use this piece of modern engineering on the key on the railway track. Voila, you have the key. Now you just need to find where to use it... but you didn't ask that question, did ya?

Sim Golf

Although I love this game, I must be missing something. I can't make a classic hole no matter what. I build a hole and watch golfers play it and then go back and change some parts but there just doesn't seem to be any way of getting a high rating for imagination. Your help is much appreciated.

Tracy Pang

Golf appeals to my fascist tendencies so you, Tracy, can go get me an iced water. And step on it. Designing a perfect course means offering enjoyment for all types of golfers. Longer holes only suit big hitters, precise holes are only good for accurate golfers. Imagination means that the golfer needs to use a variety of shots to achieve par. So holes that require the Fade, Draw and High Backspin shots will get that imagination rating up. In case you didn't know, in the raise/lower terrain menu, there is a shot description button at the far right. Click the button and then pick a

CODE

The Oracle shows you how to squeeze out every ounce of gaming goodness from your favourite games.

Jedi Knight II

To enter the codes, the console must first be activated by holding shift and the ~ key.

To activate these cheat codes enter "helpusobi 1" (without the quotes) into the console.

To change the lightsaber color:saberColor <insert color> [Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, and Purple.]
God mode - god
999 health - undying
All ammo - give ammo
Full Force - give force
No clipping - noclip

To activate these cheats, type "devmapall" in the console.
God mode - god
No clipping mode - noclip
Enemies ignore you - notarget
Kill yourself - kill
All weapons and health/armor at max - give all
Health to 100% - give health
Armour at 100% - give armor
Ammo at 100% - give ammo
Give item X (amount) - give X #
All Force powers - setForceAll 3
Dismemberments - g_saberRealisticCombat 1

Medal of Honour Allied Assault

Edit the shortcut to MOHAA so it reads the following:
 "C:LOCATION OF
 GAME\mohaa.exe" +set
 developer 1 +set ui_console 1
 +set cheats 1 +set
 thereisnomonkey 1

When in the game, press ~ to display the console window and put in one of the following cheats.
Gives player all weapons - wuss
God mode - dog
Heal player - fullheal
Remove target - notarget
No clipping - noclip
List of the player's inventory - listinventory
Teleport to location - tele x y z

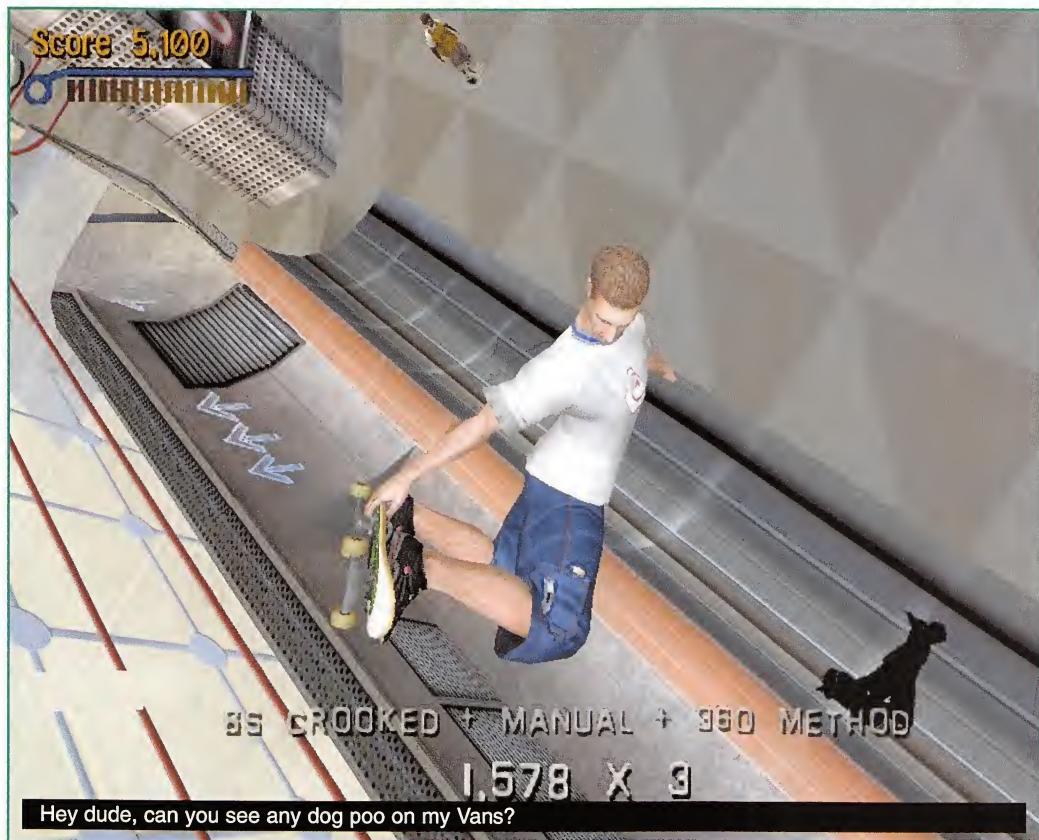
Print out current location and angles - coord
Set current health - health
Kill the player - kill
Summon the specified weapon - giveweapon
 weapons/[weapon_name].tik - e.g. to summon the bazooka
type: Giveweapon
 weapons/bazooka.tik

Weapon names:
Colt 45 - colt45
Frag Grenade - m2frag_grenade
Walther P38 - p38
Steilhandgranate - steilhandgranate
M1 Garand - m1_garand
Mauser KAR 98K - kar98
Shotgun - shotgun
Bazooka - bazooka
Panzerschreck - panzerschreck
BAR - bar
StG 44 - mp44
Thompson - thompsonsmg
MP40 - mp40
Springfield '03 Sniper - springfield
KAR98 Sniper - kar98sniper

Serious Sam

To enter these codes push the Tilde key (~) and type:
please open - unlocks all doors
please invisible - invisibility
PLEASE GOD - God mode
PLEASE GIVEALL - Get all weapons/ammo
PLEASE FLY - Fly mode
PLEASE GHOST - Same as Fly but no clipping ON/OFF
PLEASE KILLALL - All onscreen enemies die and gib
Unlock Mental Mode
 To unlock Mental mode, beat Serious mode and start a new game. When you do, Mental will be fading in and out under Serious. In Mental mode, all enemies will fade in and fade out like they have stealth.
 Itching to brew in Morrowind? Let our guide fulfil all your transmuting needs.

ORACLE



point on your course to 'rate'. Use it on different parts of the hole to see how golfers of differing abilities stand up. The ratings tell you what kind of golfer is favoured - and alert you to your lack of talent, obviously. Inexperienced course designers tend to make holes that favour length over other attributes. If a golfer with NO ability is doing better than a golfer with imagination - it's back to the drawing board, kid.

Play the hole yourself to see if you tend to use the same shots the whole time. Pretty boring, huh? If you damned brats used some creativity instead of the quickload button then maybe I would be free to roam the ether instead of answering your dribblings. Of course, you could just play on an easier difficulty setting, the perfect option for cowards and halfwits everywhere.

Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3

You're gonna think I'm an idiot but on the cruise ship I can't complete the goal, "Invert the

High Wires". I've tried grinding on the wires all the way along the ship. Have pity on my wretched self.

James Brooks

As much as I like Tony Hawk (i.e. not much), this is pitiful. An invert is a trick in the sport known as skateboarding. The default

command for that is Down + Lip Trick. You need to launch off one of the white-walled half-pipes near the pool (at the top of the path down to the museum) and do a handstand (or invert) on one of the wires.

Sources closer to inner alignment with Tony Hawk suggest that you must empty the

pool first, which could be the case. Just grind the small pipe on the other side of the pool and you're away. Run along, young one.

Return to Castle Wolfenstein

I can't beat that big bad-arsed boss in Mission 5 of RTCW. The Über Soldat is just too tough, especially with all those other bad dudes wandering around.

Kimberley Blade

Well Kim, bosses are tough. It's Über Soldat by the way, although if you must form an English version, Super Soldier will do. As soon as the Deathshead cut scene ends, shoot the super soldier's helmet, preferably with the Mauser rifle. It should come off in no time, then you must concentrate on the armour. While this is going on, or if you haven't been able to achieve even this much, you need to find cover. The Panzerfaust shots are easy enough to avoid but the Tesla beams are fairly deadly. One place is in the room under Deathshead.

Use your Panzerfaust rockets and Venom weapon on the nasty and try to keep those Luger-wielding minions at bay. Keep targeting the head and armour and then plug away until this glorious creation is put to rest. There are health packs to be picked up should the pride of the Aryan elite prove taxing.



GI Johannes

Morrowind Alchemy Guide

Alchemy Equipment

Mortar and Pestle – Only requirement to mix a potion. Also determines potion strength.

Retort - Increases the magnitude and duration of all positive effects in a potion.

Alembic - Decreases the magnitude and duration of all negative effects.

Calcaiator - Increases the magnitude and duration of all effects in a potion

The quality of your apparatus also effects the outcome of your potion.

The different quality levels are.

Apprentice, Journeyman, Master, Grandmaster and SecretMaster.

Recipes

Note: You only need any two of the below-listed ingredients to make the respective potion.

Cure recipes

Cure blight disease

Ash salts, meteor slime, scrib jelly

Cure common disease

Chokeweed, daedra skin, gravedust, green & red lichen, muck, willow anther

Cure paralysis

Corkbulb root, netch leather, scamp skin, willow anther

Cure poison

Black lichen, ghoul heart, meteor slime, rat meat, raw ebony, roobrush, scathecraw, scrib jelly

Restore recipes

Restore agility

Bonemeal, sload soap

Restore endurance

Gravedust, scales

Restore fatigue

Bread, chokeweed, crab meat, hack-lo leaf, hound meat, large Kwama egg, muffin, saltrice, scrib jerky, scuttle, Kwama egg

Restore health

Corkbulb root, corporus weepings, emerald, marshmerrow, resin, saltrice, whickwheat

Restore intelligence

Bittergreen petals, ruby, scrap metal, treated bittergreen petals

Restore luck

Crab meat, hack-lo leaf, kresh fiber

Restore magicka

Comberry, daedra's heart, frost salts, void salts

Restore personality

Guar hide, heather, scamp skin

Restore strength

Dreugh wax, gold kanet, roland's tear, scamp skin, stoneflower petals

Restore willpower

Meteor slime, scathecraw, scrib jelly, trama root

Restore speed

Raw ebony, resin

Fortify recipes

Fortify agility

Ectoplasm, fire salts, roobrush, sload soap

Fortify endurance

Daedra's heart, guar hide, netch leather

Fortify fatigue

Hound meat, scrib jerky, scuttle

Fortify health

Human flesh, large Kwamma egg, shalk resin, vampire dust

Fortify intelligence

Ash yam, bloat, netch, leather

Fortify luck

Corkbulb root, corporus weepings, guar hide

Fortify magicka

Emerald, saltrice, stoneflower petals

Fortify personality

Green lichen, kresh fiber, stoneflower petals

Fortify speed

Kagouti hide, moon sugar, shalk resin

Fortify strength

Ash yam, daedra skin, dreugh wax, vampire dust

Fortify willpower

Bloat, meteor slime, scrib jelly, whickwheat

Fortify attack

Ghoul heart

Resist recipes

Resist common disease

Ash yam, kagouti hide, pearl, resin

Resist fire

Black anther, fire petal, frost salts

Resist frost

Black lichen, fire salts

Resist magicka

Ash, salt

Resist poison

Alit hide, kwama cuttle, rat meat

Resist shock

Crab meat, scrap metal

Shield recipes

Fire shield

Comberry, fire salts, raw glass, sload soap

Frost shield

Frost salts, large Kwama egg, raw ebony, willow anther

Lightning shield

Corkbulb root, crab meat, scrap metal

Miscellaneous recipes

Detect animal

Alit hide, ampoule pod, bloat, ectoplasm

Detect enchantment

Hound meat, hypha facia, marshmerrow

Detect key

Ash yam, diamond, muck, spore pod

Dispel

Bungler's bane, moon sugar, pearl

Feather

Heather, ruby, scuttle

Invisibility

Bittergreen petals, diamond, treated bittergreen petals

Levitate

Coda flower, racer plume, trama root

Light

Black anther, red lichen

Night eye

Daedra's heart, kagouti hide

Reflect

Comberry, diamond, hound meat

Spell absorption

Fire petal, vampire dust, void salts

Swift swim

Daedra skin, scales, scrib jerky

Telekinesis

Alit hide, bonemeal, scuttle

Water breathing

Hack-lo leaf, kwama cuttle, luminous russula, pearl

Water walking

Ampoule pod, kwama cuttle, scales, violet coprinus

Drain recipes

Drain agility

Ash salts, black anther, Daedra's heart, diamond, emerald, hypha facia, pearl, raw ebony, ruby

Drain endurance

Bittergreen petals, black anther, bunglers bane, emerald, moon sugar, treated bittergreen petals, void salts

Drain fatigue

Bonemeal, comberry, corporus

weepings, guar hide, Hypha facia, Kagouti hide, kwama, cuttle luminous, russula, any size corporusmeat hunk, any size wrapped corporusmeat hunk, spore pod, violet coprinus, marshmerrow, shalk resin

Drain health

Coda flower, ectoplasm, fire petal, fire salts, Gold kanet, green lichen, roland's tear, roobrush,

Any size corporusmeat hunk, any size wrapped corporusmeat hunk, ruby, scathecraw, scrap metal

Drain intelligence

Alit hide, coda flower, gravedust, human flesh, muck, raw glass

Drain luck

Chokeweed, dreugh wax, gold kanet, hypha facia, roland's tear, stoneflower petals, moon sugar

Drain magick

Bittergreen petals, bloat, gravedust, kresh fiber, any size corporusmeat hunk, any size wrapped corporusmeat hunk, rat meat, red lichen, scamp skin, trama root, treated bittergreen petals

Drain personality

Bonemeal, coda flower, heather, human flesh, muck, netch leather, scales, shalk resin, sload soap, willow anther

Drain speed

Black lichen, frost salts, heather, kresh fiber, raw glass, red lichen, trama root, bunglers bane

Drain strength

Black lichen, bunglers bane, ectoplasm, green lichen, raw glass, saltrice, scathecraw spore pod

Drain willpower

Ampoule pod, chokeweed, corporus weepings, dreugh wax, marshmerrow, racer plumes, roobrush

Harmful recipes

Burden

Gold kanet, resin, roland's tear, scrib jerky

Damage fatigue

Poison

Damage health

Poison

Damage intelligence

Wickwheat

Paralyze

Ampoule pod, daedra skin, fire petal, ghoul heart, hackle-lo leaf, large Kwama egg, rat meat, spore pod, void salts, wickwheat

Poison

Luminous russula, poison, violet coprinus

Weakness to poison

Poison

Vampirism

Vampire dust

Mod Life

When out of the box just ain't enough

Unreal Tournament: Godz

Where to start...Godz is an absolutely amazing multi-player mod for Unreal Tournament in which the players take the roles of one of six very different gods pitted against each other to determine who is the strongest. Playing something like a Dragonball Z episode, Godz features a staggering number of special powers and movement options. Set in the far flung future, a godlike alien race known as the QuaL has set up a tournament that all planets are free to enter. Due to the nature of the combat, only the most powerful and supernatural of warriors are able to enter. These competitors are the Godz.

Each God has a number of attacks at his or her disposal ranging from a long range, low damage attack to homing missiles to a bouncing explosive. There is no equipment in the game so each character starts with all available powers. A mysterious force known as Qi powers each attack or ability. As long as the character has enough Qi they can repel attacks, shoot energy beams and fly. When Qi runs out, the character is helpless. A long period of inactivity allows Qi time to recharge but you'd better be in a good safe spot or you're a sitting duck.



Godz comes packaged with four different game styles, including 1-on-1 Deathmatch, Alliance, Endurance and Capture the Orbs. Each game style (aside from Deathmatch) features an interesting twist on convention that adds a huge amount to the playability of Godz. Endurance is a 1-on-1 deathmatch with no time for a character to heal between matches. The player goes from one fight to another until dead. Alliance pits two teams of two

against each other but allows players on the same team to merge their attacks into a far more powerful force. Capture the Orbs plays somewhat like Capture the Flag but with the added bonus of the orbs each giving the player carrying them a specific power. This list of features barely even scratches the surface of all of the fun to be had in Godz. It looks amazing, plays fantastically and will keep you coming back for more.

5/5

For: Unreal Tournament

Version: Release 1.07

Size: 54.6MB

URL: <http://dynamic2.gamespy.com/~godz/>



For: Dungeon Siege

Nivisec Item Overhaul

Anyone who thought that there weren't enough cool magic items in Dungeon Siege can sleep easy knowing that they now have the Nivisec Item Overhaul. With over 10000 new suffixes and prefixes as well as around 5000 rare or unique items there's nothing left to complain about. Go and find them all.

5/5



For: Max Payne

True Matrix

The first of the big Matrix-inspired mods to come out for Max Payne. True Matrix puts you in the shoes of Neo and encourages you to act out your antisocial tendencies. New guns, new levels, new models, new uses of bullet time, cool bullet dodging and kung fu combine to make this mod a keeper.

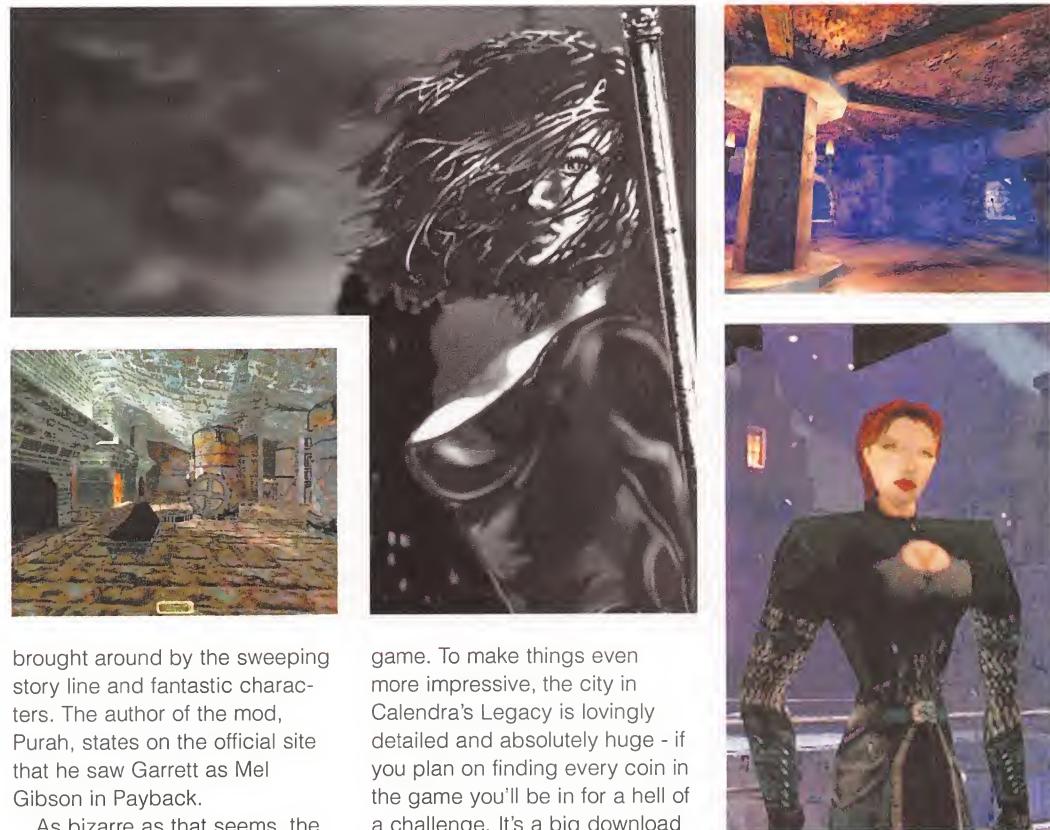
4/5

Thief 2: Calendra's Legacy

Regarded as one of the best, if not *the* best Thief 2 mission around, Calendra's Legacy, sequel to the equally well regarded Calendra's Cistern, is an epic in every sense of the word. Clocking in at a staggering 324MB, Legacy is the culmination of thousands of hours' work and believe us when we say it's definitely worth it.

Though it's not necessary to have played Calendra's Cistern, Legacy takes place directly after, with Garrett waking up one morning clutching an artifact known as the Cylix of Jortul. Without further ado our antihero finds a pawnshop that can put him in contact with a potential buyer. Of course things can't go as easily as planned for our friend Garrett and things quickly go from bad to worse and a whole new can of worms is opened. There's a double cross, an old flame and more that needs to be attended to before Garrett can once again sleep in peace.

With the emphasis placed more strongly on mood and story than it is on action, Calendra's Legacy is a welcome departure from the majority of Thief mods around. Purists may be put off by the change in tone of the game but given a little time even the most die-hard fan should be



brought around by the sweeping story line and fantastic characters. The author of the mod, Purah, states on the official site that he saw Garrett as Mel Gibson in Payback.

As bizarre as that seems, the vengeful but generally fair nature of the character comes out beautifully. Little else can be said about the plot without giving it away but you'll have to trust us when we say it's the most interestingly plotted and literate mods available for any

game. To make things even more impressive, the city in Calendra's Legacy is lovingly detailed and absolutely huge - if you plan on finding every coin in the game you'll be in for a hell of a challenge. It's a big download but for fans of the Thief series, it's a definite must have.

5/5

For: Thief the Dark Project

Version: N/A

Size: 324MB

URL: keepofmetalandgold.com

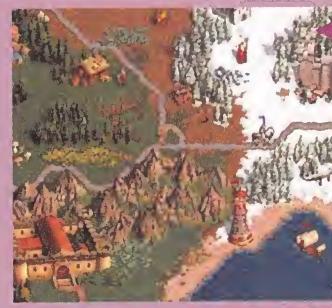


For: Half Life

Fraggin Crew 5.0 Beta

The fastest most furious death-match for HL is here and it'll have you bouncing around like a rabbit injected with dexamphetamines and purified caffeine. Big fraggin fun where only the greatest twitch reflex can save you from certain death. Do you think you're good enough to join the Fraggin Crew?

4/5



For: Heroes of Might & Magic 3

Wake of Gods

An expansion/mission pack for HOMM III, Wake of Gods (WoG) adds new heroic abilities, magic, items, creatures, dwellings and a whole lot more to the already expansive world of HOMM. There's so much good stuff in this mod that it would be impossible to list it all in 50 words. Trust us, it's really good.

5/5

INBOX



A shiny new Intellimouse Explorer and a shiny copy of Dungeon Siege goes to our Letter of the Month.

DUNGEON DILEMMAS

This is pretty much a direct response to Anthony's editorial (PC PowerPlay #74) where it's argued that market research and careful refinement of existing products will ultimately lead to better games. Now while I do agree wholeheartedly that many of the features that made Diablo II so playable were missing in Dungeon Siege (graphics aside), I just can't see how games can move forward if comparisons with existing products keep dragging them back.

In fact, to quote the editorial (this feels like year 12 media analysis all over again), it is suggested that Gas Powered games should have looked at Dungeon Siege's "most successful antecedent - Diablo II - and copy all the good bits". Copy?!!? Where's the fun in that? Who says mana has to be blue? Why not green for health and yellow for magic? Games will never evolve without fresh ideas and changes.

A nice (and I do mean nice) looking 3D engine is a good place to start, but the virtual nature of computers opens up an unlimited plane of expansion that most big developers just don't want to risk anymore, preparing to mesh successful genres and improve features to the nth degree. Refinement is good, but I'm finding things need to be a bit more nowadays to grab my attention.

Paul Hallett

We can't agree with you more Paul. Ideas and changes are going to be the two things that bring about the next evolution in gaming. The point that was being made about Dungeon Siege was that it was clearly a Diablo II inspired game, but instead of taking the gameplay element that made the latter game great all it

LETTER OF THE MONTH

SHONKY STORES

You have all heard the story of Scorpian007 and that storekeeper, now hear mine. My PC was a Duron 850 with a GigaByte Mobo, also a Vibra 128 sound card. You be thinking why I only mentioned those things, but keep reading. We bought it under a year ago at a certain chain store located in Parkmore Shopping Centre. The outside of the machine looked great, and for the time, the inside was to. I never had to open my case (apart from installing a CD-RW) and never went into BIOS. Anyway, for a few months Windows (ME then 98SE) had been crashing. I thought it was just the usual stuff.

My friend came over a couple of weeks ago and saw this. He asked me what kind of MoBo I had and I wasn't sure of the exact model. He asked if I knew the normal CPU temperature. I didn't know, so he went into BIOS and checked. 54 degrees idle. A Duron 850 is meant to be like 35 degrees or so I was told. We found the Parkmore store of this chain had closed so we went to the nearest store in that chain, a shop in The Glen. My mother went with me and got me to explain the story to the shopkeeper. He instantly accused me of overclocking (which I don't know how to do and even if I did, I was still under warranty so I wouldn't) and made me look stupid in front of my mother, who said she knew nothing about computers.

He did this so my mother would believe him and would ignore me if I said we were being screwed. After one week and \$540 (which I need to pay, even though I get stuff-all pay for being a slave to a local paper), we get it back. Oh, the fun doesn't end here, folks. The new MoBo is from the unheard of company DFI, BIOS has a password on it, my computer detects my 3.5" floppy as a 5.25", it

seemed to take were the tired conventions. Red for health, blue for mana...

DRIVEN INSANE

I have noticed a very disturbing trend lately. The crackdown on car advertising showing drivers "breaking the law" or simply being reckless while driving the latest vehicle could, and probably will, have some rather nasty repercussions for some great driving games. It would not surprise me one little bit if the OFLC started banning driving games that portray driving in a similar manner. One example that

doesn't detect my CD-ROM or CD-RW at all, I have no sound, Windows is still crashing, the temperature (checked in SANDRA) is still high and the settings are all up the creek. I convinced my dad of this, showing him all the errors, and he gave me the password to BIOS and permission to open the case. All fixed, right? Oh no.

I fix the floppy, no problems. I also get rid of the password. I open the case and check my IDE cables, one of the IDE pins on the back of my burner is bent. I fix it. Now I notice my sound card has gone walkabout. I tell my dad and he tells my mum. We recount what happened to each of us on the phone with the shop keeper and find he has told us all different stories. He told my dad the CPU crumbled in his hands and (in a loud angry voice when the PC was picked up) that nothing's wrong with the PC and he'd better not come back saying there is. He rang him up and asked him why he took the sound card. He said he must have forgotten to put it in. But, I ask, why did he screw in a panel at the back where it used to be?

When my dad went to get the card, the shopkeeper avoided him (my dad saw him watching though) and got an assistant to give my dad the card and shoo him from the store. He also bought an extra case fan from a guy we knew. After many long hours of installing, downloading and crusty eyes I managed to get my PC back in working order, or as good as it can get under Windows. So, I was well and truly screwed.

Worms (#pcpp/PCPP Forums)

We feel for you my friend. We can't really help with taking the dealer down a notch but what we can do is give you a little prize to make the pain go away.

springs to mind is Need for Speed: Porsche 2000, a game where "real" cars are used in unrealistic ways. It's the kind of knee-jerk reaction we've come to expect from the OFLC to assume that such a product will encourage young males to speed and drive stupidly on the real road. But unfortunately there is quite a groundswell of support to ban the offending ads. Will our games be next?

Peanut Giblets

God, we hope not. There always seems to be some fallout aimed towards the gaming

industry for some reason. Somebody kills themselves - gaming. Somebody kill someone else - gaming again. Lets just pray that no idiot thinks that people drive poorly because of gaming.

BAD NAZIS

Recently I reinstalled the beast Wolf 3D, and realised the main reasons why RTCW just didn't cut it like its sequel.

1. There should have been no cross hair in RTCW, just like Wolf 3D :)
2. You shouldn't have had to use mouse, only use keys like Wolf 3D
3. You should have had the little picture of you down the bottom of screen.
4. You shouldn't be able to see further than 15 metres, it should just all blur after that.
5. All the doors should look the same
6. There weren't any people in blue suits that were 133+ shit
7. The sound was all wrong in RTCW, it should have just been loud durrrrrs and buuuuuuurs when you ran into walls and got shot and ...did anything
8. When you kill people they don't leave a little blue box of ammo in RTCW. Tsk, tsk
9. The chain gun in RTCW was not NEARLY as sexy as it was in Wolf 3D. In Wolf 3D, it jumped forward and was just cool.
10. It didn't have the cool music in the menu!

I was very disappointed with Id Software's attempt at making RTCW nearly as good as Wolf 3D.

Mish

Next time we get our hands on Id, we'll tell them what you said. Hopefully it'll make them pull their socks up ;)

LIZARDS ON STEROIDS SUCK

Yep, I did it. Finished Jedi Outcast. Great game but the ending, put simply, SUCKED! It's predictable that you have to beat the main evil Jedi, Dessian, and predictability isn't too bad. But they could have made him a worthy opponent! Upon strolling up to Dessian, lightsaber in hand, I casually use force speed to give myself a slight advantage... and in two seconds - TWO SECONDS - I had cut him down! Some run of the mill stormtroopers put up a better fight. The shadow Jedi's can wield a saber a hundred times better than him, but even they sometimes diced me up. The guy in the Mech/fork-lift suit with the force-field took me ages to crack. But big bad Dessian dies instantly? Ahhh...that's just crap! In reaching the ending of a game you usually

expect a showdown that would take at least ten throws to beat. But in one go? In two seconds? I think Lucas Arts need to brush up on Bad Guy skills. Well I'm not here to blow sunshine up your arses. Good job with the mag but it's time to go dish out some money, get a new game and crack it. I just hope in the next Lucas Arts masterpiece, the end boss doesn't fight like a sloth with Down's syndrome. Goodbye.

SHISH - Albury NSW

Jeez - that's a bit harsh Shish but we agree that some of the earlier bosses posed much more of a threat than Dessian.

HELP PLEASE

As I near the end of my schooling life, the next goal on the life agenda is a career. You know, make a life and a bit of money. Now I'm not the kind of person who settles for something other than what they want, so when I sat down and gave serious consideration to the direction of my life, I had an epiphany of sorts. Not only am I an avid gamer, but I am also a dedicated artist. I write, draw, paint and design, and that is what I would like to do with my life, but linking the two together never occurred to me. I soon began to look at games in an entirely different way, as a creative outlet. Although we hear a lot about the programmers who actually create the game, we tend to put the concept or the idea from which the game evolved in the background. When I put it into perspective, creating a game would be the most rewarding artistic experience for me. Games can be well written with a driving story, aesthetic beauty and appeal, full 3D and, most importantly, interaction with the audience. So basically what this letter is all about is an outcry for help. If anyone knows anything at all about how to get involved in concept art or writing for gaming companies, or anyone who simply wants to trade ideas about games, please send me an email and help out a fellow gamer who just might get to draw up the concept art or write the story for a game that you will buy and enjoy. Oh and just to clear things up, if any reader has the idea that I'm an angst-ridden teenager who sulks in his own world of wannabe depressing art, that's not me. I see art as something that should be enjoyed and appreciated, but most of all, be fun. So please, no bullshit about being an art student. Thanks.

Perry Hawkins
perry_hawkins22@hotmail.com

FROM THE FORUMS



This is a message to EVERYONE! All gamers, whether no hair, fat, short, skinny or weird. We are screwed! An Epic Title has not been made since Half-Life... That thing was as long as a horse's shlong and nothing after it can be described as long!

Max Payne is short, Deus Ex is kinda long but not a game this long! Yes, big environments on Halo and Zelda, but still not farken long enough!!! Remember LBA2! That thing went for ages and ages! THPS2??? That was long the first time you played it! Now I can finish a character in an hour...

WE NEED A GAME THAT HAS 10 CDs, takes up over a gig of space and is fun!!!! (OK Diablo 2 is mad and long but still there aren't enough characters!!!!!!)

THIS IS NEEDED!!!!

Mad_Yugo

Xtremly - but think how long these games would take to develop. On top of the engine (if it has to be coded) there's a long storyline that has to be developed to keep the player interested, there's many a sound effect to record, many music tracks, and of course, the levels have to be created. In FPSs this means countless hours spent in front of an editor churning out levels that are fun to play in, with interaction (scripting).

And all of this has to be performed inside of a publisher's deadline. So if they can keep the game going, this can produce a Duke Nuke Foreva situation where gamers give up waiting for it and go on to other games.

On the other hand, it will eventually produce a kick-arse game that takes ages to beat. But will it be worth the wait? I'd rather want a medium-length game like Deus Ex now than have an extra-long game like HL. Deus Ex is a good length for a game.

Mullacy

Deus Ex not good enough for you? Clearly your standards are FAR too high. Half-Life isn't that bloody long either. I'll restrain from just blabbing out titles of games and just say...

Go play an RPG.

Arach

CAPTAIN COMIC

Let's whack the old Time Machine into reverse overdrive and travel all the way back to 1988. Remember the Bicentennial. Remember the Tall Ships. Remember that song they all sang at Uluru with scant regard for the wishes of the indigenous landholders of the region. Remember, most of all, EGA.

It stood for Extended Graphics Array, but to a slip of a lad aged 11 it stood for Excellent Graphics Array because by gum, EGA graphics were totally where it was at, graphically. And on EGA, on one of the first 16 colour monitors for a thrashed-out 286SX running at 16MHz, we played Captain Comic.

A simple platformer, a series of levels, a little man in a set of blue overalls and a bunch of psychotic birds and other enemies that made even less sense, the gameplay and graphics of Captain Comic rivaled most consoles of the era and certainly stomped all other PC offerings into the dust. Creator Michael Denio set out to see if it was even possible to create a high-quality, graphical arcade-style game on the PC, and he succeeded beyond expectations. Captain Comic was freeware, and by 1991 had appeared on almost every hard drive in Australian schools (FEEL the blistering 286 power, FIGHT for the only 386SX in the lab). The game was just short enough for the skilled to be able to finish it in the space of a single lunchtime.

With the success of Captain Comic, Michael Denio let it all go to his head and created a sequel. Pushing the abilities of EGA to the limit, he created a surprisingly varied world using only 320x240 pixels and 16 colours. CC2: Fractured Reality was an 8-direction scroller, and some of the more

massive environments were as many as three or even four screens high.

Fractured Reality saw Captain Comic, flush from his successes on the planet Tambi, lured to a mysterious alien planet by a distress signal. A meaty bash through a mostly standard platforming environment later, and the player came across what must have been the first ever hub in a PC game - the Temple. From here, it was possible to select one of six fractured realities, battle through parts of them (or complete them on the first try - a true measure of early nineties 133+ness), and then return to the hub. The game had a vast number of collectible objects, and a 12-slot inventory to carry them around in. Also, because the manual highlighted all of the special objects, myself, my best mate and his little brother would spend hours trawling through the realities we couldn't quite finish, looking for the Super Jet Pack Fuel Pack, and the Pinwheel Shot Randomiser, not to mention the elusive sixth and seventh cans of Blastola Cola.

Fractured Reality had it all: chatty NPCs, wicked levels, mine cart rides, killer bats, triffids, toboggan slaloms, 'happy feet' spells, treetop adventures, teddy bears, a star having a breather on earth, and in the penultimate level even wargames, where the Captain was trapped in a tiny miniature platformer, fighting miniature enemies.

Captain Comic was a little-known milestone on the road to PC gaming as it exists today, and the sequel Fractured Reality remains an even more unfairly obscure, but extremely important piece of gaming history.



It's a birds and the bees thing



Ah bug-eyes, how I've missed you



Swimming in a PC game! Who'd a-thunk it?

SOUND BLASTER AWE 64 GOLD SOUNDSCARDS TO WIN!

PC PowerPlay THE AUSTRALIAN PC GAMING MAGAZINE OF GAMES CD ROM

2 YEARS LATE... WORTH THE WAIT? **DUNGEON KEEPER** Bell, it's here at last

Playtested: **HEXEN II**

ON THE CD: **ULTIMA ONLINE** Ultima Online: The Return of the King

RPG + **LANDS OF LORE II** Special Preview

VIRTUAL REALITY VR: The Next Step

ISSUE 16 September 1997 \$4.95 AUSTRALIA

REVIEWED

| | |
|----------------|-----|
| Dungeon Keeper | 85% |
| Warlords III | 89% |
| Moto Racer | 94% |

POWERPLAY'S PAST

PC PowerPlay #16 September 1997

Aptly enough, with the imminent arrival of Neverwinter Nights, and Morrowind already gracing the PCPP Beast's hard drive, PCPP#16 featured a phat report on the future of the RPG. While we here in the glowing future of PCPP#76 get excited about immersive 3D worlds and the first working DM system, David Wildgoose was writing breathlessly about such upcoming games as Ultima Online, Daggerfall, Elder Scrolls I and even Ultima IX - the Buggiest Game Ever. Also in PCPP#16, Jere Lawrence announced the arrival of an exciting new company called 3Dfx and a crazy videocard called the Canopus Total 3D, which featured spatial sound positioning. On a videocard. And its Quake benchmark score was a staggering 19.27fps at 640x480. As some wise

philosopher guy probably once said, the past often seems like a foreign country. With crappier graphics.

What We Said:

- "Is there enough in Ultima Online to keep me coming back for more? Will players roleplay or treat it like another chat room? Will player killers ruin the experience?" March Stepnik, pondering the upcoming Ultima Online

- "Well here we have it. Someone's gone and made an Ancient Egyptian flight sim. With this out of the way, we can now all get on with more important things." Pete Sharpe, somewhat nonplussed by Sandwarriors

845GNEME533

533 MHz

Bluetooth

DDR

Intel LAN

6 Channel

USB 2.0

MHz

845E Max2-BLR

Intel 845E chipset Socket 478 ATX



Bluetooth
USB 2.0
S-Bracket
D-Bracket

845G Max-L

Intel 845G chipset Socket 478 ATX



USB 2.0
S-Bracket
D-Bracket
Intel LAN

645E Max2-LRU

SIS 645DX Socket 478 ATX DDR333



ATA
DDR333
USB 2.0
S-Bracket
D-Bracket
FSB533

G4MX4600-VT

SIS 645DX Socket 478 ATX DDR333



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• NVIDIA® nfiniteFX™ II Engine
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• Advanced Programmable Pixel Shader
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DVD GUIDE

Some people say that nothing in life is free. If only they subscribed to PCPP they'd see the error in their words. This month we're pleased to be able to bring you yet another classic freebie, courtesy of those wonderful folk at EA. Command & Conquer - the GDI missions! See CD01 for the full run-down. And if you're of a more evil persuasion, keep buying future issues until we finally decide to include the evil empire of NOD missions too.

Manga lovers are gonna get cute little crosses in their eyes when they click through to this month's Spotlight. We've included episode one of Gundam Wing, the futuristic anime that's already become a cult classic. Check out e-Bay for a mind-boggling array of collectables. You'll also notice some huge game demos as well, not least of which is Divine Divinity.

Mods Plus has almost a gig's worth of gaming excellence in it. If you own Thief 2 then you're going to be shouting from the rooftops. If you don't but you've been looking for an excuse to buy it, then Calendra's Legacy is all the excuse you'll need. Let's not forget to mention that I've also included both Counter-Strike 1.4 updates (mod and retail) and the Transformer Quake mod, too.

The Really Old Man has been at it again, too. God help us if he ever gets cable! This issue's Bunker is bigger and badder than ever. This month's feature focus is game editors and I've also included some new instructions for the techno-cripples out there who couldn't figure out how to access the files from previous DVDs.

To curtail any auto-whinging I've completely re-arranged CD02 this time around (I remember what happened last time all the demos disappeared off CD01 to make room for Unreal) and put nothing but demos and Daniel's Mod Life files there. Included are Jedi Knight 2, The Sum Of All Fears, Tony Hawk 3 and more. It's chockers!



FREE ANIME! Gundam Wing Episode 1

Distributor: Madman
Duration: 30 minutes
Notes: Works on set-top DVD player or on a PC with software DVD player installed

To save Earth from pollution and over-population, an ambitious space colonisation program is launched. The Universal Century calendar is adopted as humanity moves into space, and by UC 0050, over 9 billion people live in Earth's orbit.

Resenting Earth Federation rule, the colonies at Side 3 declare independence and in UC 0079, the Principality of Zeon begins the One-Year War against the Federation. Using state-of-the-art fighting machines called mobile suits, Zeon quickly gains the upper hand. But the Earth Federation is about to launch a mobile suit of its own....



DVD POWERPLAY DEMOS



2002 FIFA WORLD CUP

Kick me in the balls!

Developer: EA
Distributor: EA
Notes: Two teams and one pitch from the final game.



DIVINE DIVINITY

It's Recurso-tastic!

Developer: Larian
Distributor: Red Ant
Notes: Probably the biggest demo ever: 401MB of total madness.



ZANZARAH

My panties are full of fairies!

Developer: Funatics
Distributor: THQ
Notes: Not for the squeamish. Probably the most brutal and violent game ever.



COUNTER STRIKE

Shoot him in the brain!

Developer: Team Counter Strike
Distributor: Vivendi
Notes: Okay so it's really a mod - but it's demo-worthy, okay?

Already recognised as the world's best soccer sim, FIFA fires its most powerful shot at the competition. With all-new "open passing", you have more control and precision than ever before. Find a breaking forward with a perfect 40-yard ball into open space, embarrass the tightest defence with cunning one-twos, or fool any keeper with deep swerving crosses. 133+!

Need: Duron 800, 64MB RAM, 32MB video card, 400MB HDD

Divine Divinity is Larian Studios' new and highly anticipated PC computer role-playing game. The game is scheduled for a Q2 2002 release and will be published by CDV. Set in a new fantasy universe, Divine Divinity takes the player on a fantastic quest in a land torn apart by corruption and dark magic.

Need: PIII 450, 64MB RAM, 16MB video card, 1GB HDD

Zanzarah is a new, graphically-rich adventure game by German-based Funatics. In it you play the role of an 18-year-old girl with near-Lara Croft proportions (not a girl, not yet a woman) and yet to be realised powers. Lead this young lass from the trials of everyday life into a world of fantasy. Ooh er.

Need: Duron 800, 64MB RAM, 32MB GeForce2, 500MB HDD

This latest point release makes numerous additions - including anti-cheat protection - and many bug fixes. Check the README file for a complete list of changes. We've included the patch for the retail version and the full install of mod version of CS.

Need: A retail copy of Counter-Strike or a copy of Half-Life

DVD POWERPLAY MODS PLUS



CALENDRA'S CISTERN

It's a classic!

Developer: Thief
Developer: Looking Glass
Distributor: Gamenation



CALENDRA'S LEGACY

It's a classic revisited!

Developer: Thief 2
Developer: Looking Glass
Distributor: Gamenation

Calendra's Cistern was the first mega-mod for Thief and due to its success the originators decided to go ahead and make the even bigger sequel - Calendra's Legacy. If you missed out on this gem the first time round, give it a whirl now (before jumping into Calendra's Legacy).

Need: Thief: The Dark Project, 500MB HDD

Calendra's Legacy is the massive and much-anticipated sequel to Calendra's Cistern. If you liked the Cistern - and we highly recommend playing it first - then you're going to love Legacy. The sheer enormity of this mission is mind-boggling.

Need: Thief 2: The Metal Age, 500MB HDD



TACTICAL OPS

It's payback time!

Developer: Unreal Tournament
Developer: Epic
Distributor: Gamenation

Tactical Ops: Assault on Terror is a semi-realistic counter terrorism first-person shooter powered by the Unreal Engine. Tactical Ops is action over realism. That is to say, the game was made so that you could jump off a two-storey building and only have slight injuries, rather than the possibility of death.

Need: Unreal Tournament, 400MB HDD



TRANSFORMERS QUAKE

More than meets the eye!

Developer: Quake 2
Developer: id Software
Distributor: Activision

TFQ brings the Transformers characters, weapons and items to the Quake2 game universe. This is most likely the final version of TFQ that will be produced for Quake2. It's missing a lot, but real life no longer allows the developer the opportunity to continue expanding the game. Alas.

Need: Quake 2, 300MB HDD

CD GUIDE

Welcome to CD PowerPlay

#76. This month is a very exciting lunar cycle indeed, dear readers, including as it does a classic full-version game and a brace of extremely tasty demos. In fact, we're flush enough to boast that we think this is one of the very finest cover CD compilations in recent months - we cater for strategists, firstperson shootists, Tom Clancy fans and even pro-skaters.

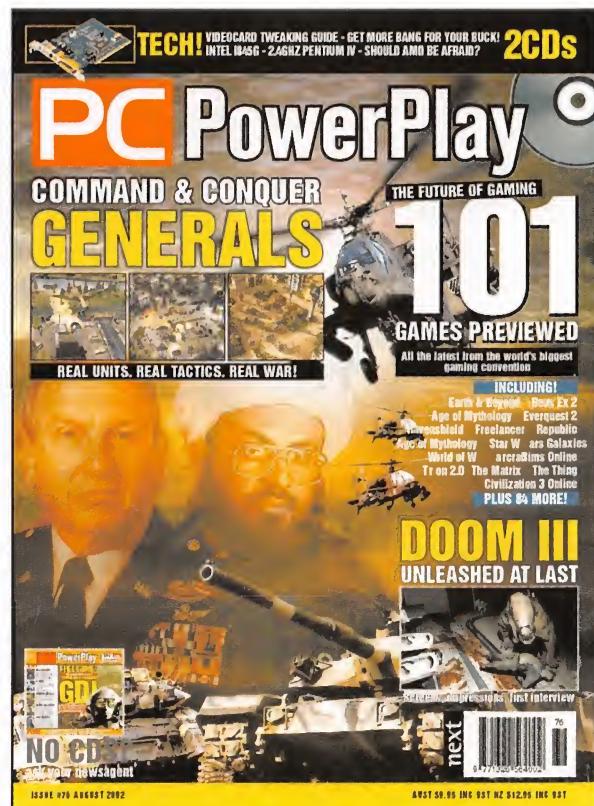
First and foremost though, how about that Command & Conquer, huh? For the mad, alcohol-addled under-rock dwellers, C&C was the first of the new wave RTS games, with a familiar interface and streamlined command system. Dune 2, also by Westwood, was slow and clunky by comparison.

Thanks to EA and the upcoming C&C Generals (see our detailed preview as part of the E3 report) we've sourced a special Win95 version of C&C that runs in a higher resolution, giving the aging game a welcome facelift. Getting it running involves a little

bit of trickery so make sure you follow the instructions to the letter.

The other thing to take note of on CDPP#76 is of course the superlative Jedi Outcast demo. You really ought to try this little number with a Gamevoice controller. Force moves are so much cooler when you shout, "Push!" and a hapless stormtrooper plummets down one of those inexplicable reactor cooler shafts they have dotted all around the place.

So spin it up and get stuck in. We predict this CD PowerPlay is going to keep you busy for quite some time.



CD01 FREE GAME! Command & Conquer

Developer: Westwood
Distributor: Electronic Arts
Notes: This is a full-CD copy. You must have CD01 in your drive to play.



Is this the finest free game yet? It's not just the original C&C, it's a special, enhanced version of the original C&C that runs under Windows and at a higher resolution. As some folks may remember, C&C came on two discs, one for the NOD missions and one for the GDI missions. Each contained quite a sizeable chunk of FMV and funky animated sequences. However, because we still wanted to be able to bring you a bunch of funky demos on CD02, we've only included the GDI missions... this time. Stay tuned for the NOD missions on a future cover CD. Take heart though; you'll still be able to play multiplayer as either side and singleplayer as the

GDI. Mammoth tanks for all! Please note that because this is a full-version game, you must have CD01 in the drive to play the singleplayer campaign.

Also, once the game has been installed, you need to run the supplied patch if you have WinXP or Win2000. Finally, with these operating systems, you need to select the C&C icon after install, right click, select Properties and set the Compatibility mode to Windows 95. Then it should run as normal! There are more detailed instructions on the interface of CD02.

Need: Ridiculously low-end machine. If you can't run this, you're in bad trouble.



CD02 MODS AND UTILITIES



JEDI OUTCAST

The Force is with us!

Developer: Lucasarts/Raven
Distributor: Activision
Notes: Singleplayer demo. Offers a small part of the singleplayer campaign.

Use the force! Yes! Forget the silly run of new movies and immerse yourself in the traditional, 'proper' Star Wars universe. Kyle Katarn is back. That thing with three eyes in all the preview screenshots is back. The lightsaber is back. They combine to make one of the tastiest gaming experiences seen this year. So check it out.

Need: Pentium III 750, 64MB RAM, 32MB Video, 300MB HDD



F1 2002

Vroom vroom vroom!

Developer: EA
Distributor: EA
Notes: Drive backwards on the track. It's always funny.

It's the most phallic thing in the universe excepting the Fender Strat! We're talking about the F1 racing car, of course. What a prong! What grunt! The best bit is when you hit the wall at 250kph and your entire skull disintegrates as pieces of white hot metal fly about your melting ears. What about the game? The game's great!

Need: Pentium III 450, 64MB RAM, 16MB TNT2, 500MB HDD



PROJECT EARTH

Massive Aldebaran-based demo!

Developer: Dreamcatcher
Distributor: Red Ant
Notes: It's the game usually known as Starmageddon, which we think is a cooler name.

Like Auntie Jess, it's really purty. Unlike Auntie Jess, it's a 3D space-borne RTS that owes much to Homeworld but injects enough original material to make it more than just a total waste of time. So it's off to sunny Aldebaran for more fun than a Toffee Flavoured Fungasm, and a whole bunch of toolled-up starfighters are along for the ride!

Need: PIII 700, 64MB RAM, 32MB GeForce, 300MB HDD



SUDDEN STRIKE 2

WW2 strikes again. Suddenly

Developer: CDV
Distributor: Red Ant
Notes: A couple of missions with a brace of tanks, a bushel of infantry and a bull elephant

Once more onto the beach - take six, my friends. Still, to be fair it has been a good six to eight weeks since we've had a decent WW2 game so Sudden Strike 2 is a welcome arrival. It's a phat RTS, is what it is, complete with Panzers and paratroopers. Get stuck into this level now.

Need: Celeron 366, 32MB RAM, 8MB Video, 200MB HDD



SUM OF ALL FEARS

Ben Affleck nude!

Developer: Red Storm
Distributor: Ubi Soft
Notes: Includes a special snap-to targeting mode for llamas and platform-junkies

Okay so maybe we're fibbing about the nude part, but this is a Ben Affleck game and, in our opinion, one of the best. Think Ghost Recon meets Good Will Hunting. Except with Morgan Freeman as well. Can you unlock the secret level that allows you to blow both these overpaid clothes horses away?

Need: Athlon 900, 64MB RAM, 32MB GeForce2, 500MB HDD



THPS3

Faceplant! PCPP Style!

Developer:
Distributor: Activision
Notes: You, the foundry, some boiling metal and a bunch of boofy blokes. It's ace!

Gnarly dude! No wait, that's surfers. Anyway, it's the bestest skating game bar none and you can trick yourself stupid in one of the parks from the full game. The best part is when you wig out mid-air and hit the tarmac with your premolars. Skin? Who needs it!

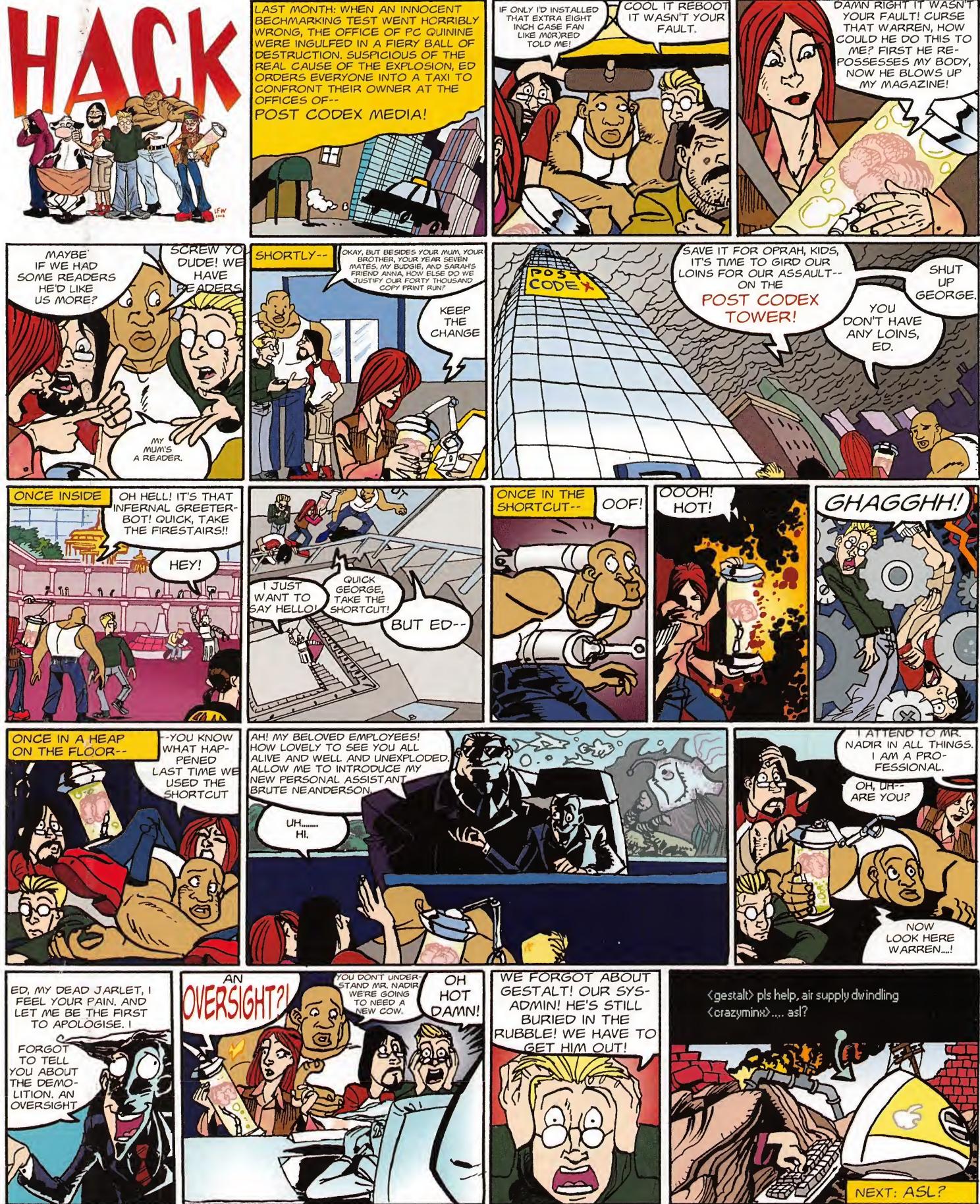
Need: Duron 750, 64MB RAM, 32MB Video, 200MB HDD



MODS

There are only three this month but boy are they pearlers! Fragging Crew Beta represents the fastest, furthest deathmatch experience for Half-Life, evoking the age-old combination of rabbits and dexamphetamine. Then there's Godz, an Unreal Tournament mod offering awesome characters, titanic weapons and the occasional laurel to rest upon. Then, for HOMM3, there's Wake of Gods. Which is cool.

Need: Half-Life, Unreal Tournament, Heroes of Might & Magic 3 and a PC capable of running these games



Words: The Man in Black ■ Pictures: L Frank Weber

PCPP#77 onsale 31st July 2002

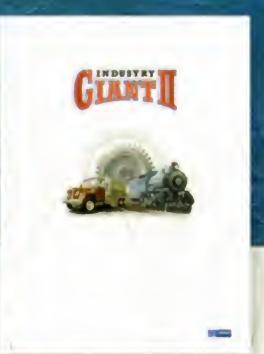
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